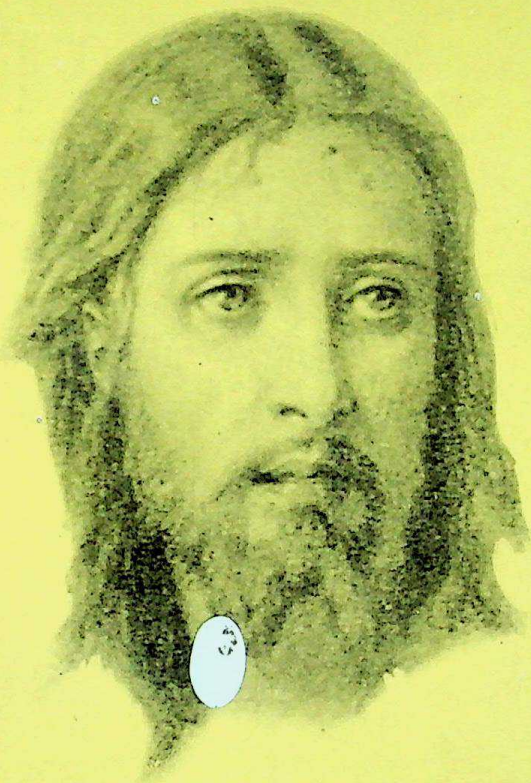




**HAVE YOU MET**  
**JESUS CHRIST?**





# HAVE YOU MET JESUS CHRIST?

## THAT IS PRAYER

Joseph Snow  
25/2/2009

**FR. J.V. MIRANDA S.J.**



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† VALERIAN

Bishop of Pune

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# *Dedication*

*TO HIS MOTHER AND OURS*

**“Gift us your Son  
in a partnership  
of Life and Love”.**

G.M. College of Education  
Raipur, Bantalab  
Jammu

Acc. No... 2183 (D)

Dated... 4-11-2015

# Dedication

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"Gift to your son  
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## FOREWORD

Being a Christian means knowing Christ and following Christ because one is fascinated by Him. There is a danger of giving top priority to following rules and regulations, performing rituals etc. These should flow from our love of Christ.

One who loves Christ will do what the Church/Religious Congregation demands. It need not be the other way round. It has surprised me in meeting priests and religious in different parts of the world, to come across quite a few who have been faithful to the rules and regulations, but have never known Jesus as a living person in their lives.

Some have confided to me: "I have wasted so many years of my priestly/religious life". They are good Christians, good religious, but what they mean is that they had been mere observers of the law and they lacked a vibrant and loving relationship with Jesus.

Rev. Fr. Joe Miranda S.J. in this book "HAVE YOU MET JESUS CHRIST?" challenges religious to develop an intimate, living and loving relationship with Jesus. The book is full of inspiring, thought-provoking insights that should lead to a complete surrender of oneself in love to Jesus.

† *Valerian D'Souza*  
*Bishop of Pune*



“Inspiring, thought provoking, awakening the heart; in a pithy style, a living communication”

*Dr. Philip Terrasa s.j.*  
*Sp. Guide and Retreat Master*

“Many insights in the interpretation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and the texts of Scripture so abundantly used. Valid and relevant thoughts on community building, faith and obedience; psychological insights for growth in love and relationships”.

*Fr. Tony da Silva s.j.*  
*Dr. and Prof. of Psychology*

“Top notch! especially for sisters who have taken vows. You have condensed the essentials very ably. We need the detailed instructions on the vows and the sacrament of Reconciliation”.

*Sr. Ann Clement FC.*  
*Former Provincial and Formator,*  
*Daughters of the Cross, Bandra*



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## “HAVE YOU MET JESUS CHRIST”?

From a hundred eyes puzzlement meets this question!  
Then two Sisters come: “Father, how can we meet Jesus Christ? You we can meet.”

“Sit down, Sisters. You see me with your eyes, but you know nothing of me as a person. Unless I tell you what I hold precious in life (my values), and tell you my feelings, and my commitments — and you choose to believe me; and unless you tell me of your life values, your feelings and commitments — and I choose to believe you — we cannot meet as persons. Meeting person is always a **faith meeting**.”

To meet Jesus Christ you must learn of his values, his feelings, his commitments, as they come through the Gospels, and you must choose to believe him; and He accepts you as you open out to him — then only you meet him as person.

PERSONS ALWAYS MEET IN FAITH, MUTUAL  
FAITH,  
AND IN INTER - LOCKING OF PERSONS,  
IN COMMITMENT.  
THIS IS PRAYER — A MEETING OF PERSONS IN  
FAITH!



## FAITH

IS NOT A COMPOSITION OF IDEAS  
a concluding argument  
an apologetic proof

no! it is a look, a view,  
a dialogue  
as mother on child  
lover on beloved

the look of a soul  
attentive, understanding  
strictly personal  
possessive grasp  
and a love surrender

*M.D. Chenu O.P.  
Theology and Grace*

In this meeting of persons, **HE TAKES THE INITIATIVE.**

His faith in me is first, his commitment, his seeking a **LIFE PARTNERSHIP** with me. This is the theological position.



"Without me you can do nothing". Jn 15,5.

"He loved me, He gave Himself up for me". Gal 2,20

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us".

Rom 5,8

## **WE RESPOND**

As closely as we can,

in a one-to-one,

in a face-to-face,

in a truth-to-truth,

in a love-to-love

**INTER-LOCKING OF PERSONS**

**IN COMMITMENT.**

His is a rich personality, as the Gospels reveal:

- inviting the young man to partnership, in love. Mk 10,17
- gentle and strongly protective of sinners. Jn 4, 8; Lk 7
- soulful in prayer with the Father. Mt. 11,25
- courageous in the garden, face to face with the mob.  
Jn 18,4
- strong in filial partnership: "The cup my Father gave me,  
shall I not drink it?" Jn 18,11
- directly challenging: "Martha, do you believe this"?  
Jn 11,26
- so concerned for "those Thou hast given me. Let them  
see the glory ..." Jn 17

**SURELY A VIBRANT, CHALLENGING,  
VIVID PERSONALITY**

\* \* \* \*



These are thoughts that were spoken in a retreat to Sisters. Publishing means expressing them in the written medium. To keep the freshness of thought, the challenge of the meeting with Jesus Christ, I have had recourse to what you must allow me to call "speak print". As one good Jacobite nurse friend said to me: You cannot go fast with this book. It stops you, it challenges you to think, examine and gift yourself! That was my purpose.

In areas of commitment in vows and of measuring up to his rich forgiving love in the sacrament of reconciliation, I have had to mark clear steps so that we do not go up in airy nothings!

If you want to use this book for a private retreat, you will find the well known themes from the Book of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

The prayers at the end of the talks lead to the person of Jesus Christ.



# 1

## JESUS MEETS THE BLIND MAN IN JERICHO

Listen to St. Luke 18, 35-43

“As Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging, and hearing a multitude going by, he enquired what this meant. They told him: “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” And he cried: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me”. And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more: “Son of David, have mercy on me”.

And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him; “What do you want me to do for you?” “Lord,” he said, “let me see again.”



## Jesus Meets the Blind Man in Jericho

And Jesus said to him: "Receive your sight, your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God."

### NOW LET US LIVE THIS GOSPEL

I see Jesus setting out on his journey — determined step!  
"Whereto", I ask, "Jericho," he says.

JERICHO?

1300 ft. below, at Deal Sea level!  
that winding road down down from Jerusalem?  
where a man can be stripped and robbed and  
left for dead,  
as you said in your parable  
of the Good Samaritan!

"And for whom are you going, Lord?"

"For a blind man by the roadside, begging"

"FOR A BLIND MAN, BY THE ROAD SIDE, BEG-  
GING"? A NOBODY!

"Yes, because I came for the nobodies of this weary  
world!"

### THE BLIND MAN

Hearing a crowd passing: WHAT IS THAT? All ears!!  
Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.

JESUS OF NAZARETH!!!

He cried out: "Jesus Son of David, have mercy.."

They scolded him, they told him to be quiet.

He cried out the more

"SON OF DAVID, HAVE PITY ON ME."

This is prayer, says Archbishop Anthony Bloom.

TO CRY OUT FROM THE DEPTHS, THE DEPTHS OF  
NEAR DESPAIR!



Jesus of Nazareth has come to Jericho! When will this happen again? When will I get another chance?

I cry out from the depths,

No, not a smooth prayer, not a soft, half plea!

**WITH ALL HIS BEING, SNATCHING HIS ONE CHANCE.**

"Out of the depths have I cried to Thee, O Lord". Ps. 129

**THIS IS PRAYER.**

### **AND JESUS STOPPED!**

Prayer that can stop the Son of God?

whole hearted prayer, from the depths!

Can you stop the Son of God? Can you stop Jesus Christ?

**QUITE EASILY:**

**HE IS THE SON OF MAN!**

**HE HAS COME FOR SINNERS**

**HE HAS COME FOR THE NOBODIES OF THIS WORLD.**

That cry was music to the Rabbi's ears!

**HE COMMANDED THE MAN TO BE BROUGHT TO HIM.**

The blind man leaps up and plants himself on his knees before Jesus, all expectation, all ears!

"What do you want me to do for you?"

"What a question, Lord," I say.

"Are you sure," He replies. "Beggars usually ask for alms. Not this man!"

**"LORD LET ME SEE AGAIN!"**

Says St. Ambrose:

Jesus was to show him mercy. So Jesus asks. Why?

To bring the whole of him into focus.

To get the whole of him directed to Jesus.

**HIS FUNDAMENTAL NEED DIRECTED TO THE  
MERCIFUL LORD.**



Jesus Meets the Blind Man in Jericho

I can see that blind face turned up, in the direction  
of the voice.

I can see those blind eyes straining to open!

AND THE ALL SEEING SON OF GOD LOOKS  
ON HIM & PROBES HIS DEPTHS!

AND POWER FLOWS FROM THE SON OF GOD!

Blind eyes are turned to the light,

Strong faith is directed to the Son of God,

And the Son of God so ready to respond.

“RECEIVE YOUR SIGHT, YOUR FAITH HAS  
SAVED YOU”

saved — not only from physical blindness

YOUR FAITH WILL MAKE YOU SEE THE  
SON OF GOD!

Why was Jesus responding so readily?

Because He came unto his own, and

“his own received Him not”.

Before Christmas, the Church asks: “When the Son of  
Man comes, do you think He will find faith on earth?”

RECEIVE YOUR SIGHT, and he opened his eyes:

STRAIGHT ON THE SON OF GOD —

the first person he sees, face-to-face.

HE TOOK IN THE SON OF GOD IN FAITH!

And he followed Him, glorifying God, OBVIOUSLY!

That was the way he took in Jesus, all of him gifted  
to the Lord.

**THAT IS MEETING JESUS CHRIST!**

\* \* \* \*



**NOW I SEE**

*I only know that I was blind  
and now I see.*

*No other man had power to do  
this thing for me.*

*I think he is of God, this man -  
THIS MAN IS GOD!*

*For I was blind and now I see  
that this caress, dispelling dark  
IS HE!*



## 2

### JESUS MEETS ZACHAEUS

“Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zachaeus; he was chief tax collector and rich.

And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd; because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree, to see him, for he was to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him: “Zachaeus, make haste and come down, for I must stay at your house today”. So he made haste and came down and received him gladly.



And when they saw it they all murmured: He has gone to be a guest of a man who is a sinner. But Zachaeus stood and said to the Lord: "Behold Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold."

And Jesus said to him: "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost." (Lk. 19, 1-5)

### LET US LIVE THIS GOSPEL

There was a man named Zachaeus, chief tax collector and rich! He was collecting taxes from the Jews to give to the Roman conquerors. He was hated for this. Besides, he collected exorbitant sums and kept a lot of it for himself and grew rich. So they hated him the more. **PUBLICAN! SINNER!**

And Jesus has come for **this man?**

Yes, to seek and save the lost!

He sought to see who Jesus was. What was moving him?

The Lord always takes the first step. **THE LORD WAS KNOCKING AT THE DOOR OF HIS HEART.**

He was small of stature, says the Gospel, the only man whose stature is mentioned in the Gospels.

### **SMALL -**

no nobility of birth,  
no dignity among his fellow Jews,  
no merit in his sinful life,  
and yet he sought to see Jesus, when his own people did not receive Him.



Jesus meets Zachaeus

BUT NO ONE CAN SEE JESUS FROM GROUND LEVEL - he must ascend.

He must come higher than the confused thinking of the crowd. The crowd cannot come to the peak of wisdom. He must come higher than the ignorance of the crowd.

He climbs the sycamore tree, to get a better view, because Jesus was to pass that way. What did he really expect? Did he ever dream that Jesus would stop, would invite himself to his, Zachaeus' house? Scarcely!

But Jesus exceeds his wildest dreams. Jesus stops below that very tree - and looks up! Their eyes meet! Jesus reads the desire in his eyes, Jesus sees the affection of his heart. He dare not invite Jesus, so Jesus invites himself into Zachaeus' house, INTO ZACHAEUS' LIFE. "Zachaeus, make haste, come down, I must stay at your house today". You hear the tone? I MUST STAY AT YOUR HOUSE TODAY!

What is moving the Lord?

Jesus knows what was to be the fruit of this invitation. Jesus is answering love with love.

THEY ALL MURMURED.

Judgment of proud, haughty men!

But this is not the judgment of the Son of God. He has come to seek and save the lost, yes the sinner!

Zachaeus stood his ground! "Behold Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any man of anything (which he had done, ofcourse) I restore fourfold.

What miracle is this? The "camel passing through the eye of the needle". The rich man entering heaven? Yes, because "all things are possible with God." Mk 10,27



He will restore fourfold what he has wrongly taken —the law demanded that. But that could not be all, just to be quiet! To owe no man anything! It was not enough. He must give of his own! "half of my goods I give to the poor".

A new business sense this, a profitable exchange!  
"SALVATION HAS COME TO THIS HOUSE. HE  
ALSO IS SON OF ABRAHAM!"  
for the little he gives, he receives a treasure,  
for the earthly he receives the heavenly,  
a small investment receives a great reward.

### IS THIS THE MEANING OF MEETING JESUS CHRIST?

\* \* \* \*

*God is ever seeking us  
We it is who stray;  
How he longs to speak to us  
Let him start today.*

"Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me". Apoc 3,21.

Intimacy and sharing. Food for life. The Divine Guest brings the greater gift, the lasting love.

### COME MEET JESUS CHRIST



# 3

## VOCATION Invitation to Partnership

*"RELIGIOUS LIFE IS A FRIENDSHIP,  
AN INTIMACY OF THE MYSTICAL ORDER  
WITH CHRIST"*

John Paul II 31, May 1980  
to Women Religious in Paris.



"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

He destined us in love, to be his sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will  
to the praise of his glorious grace  
which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved.  
In him, we have redemption through his blood,  
the forgiveness of our trespasses  
according to the riches of his grace  
which he has lavished on us.  
For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight  
the mystery of his will, according to his purpose  
which he set forth in Christ  
as a plan for the fulness of time  
to unite all things in him, things in heaven  
and things on earth.

In him also, according to the purpose of him who accomplishes  
all things according to the counsel of his will,  
we who first hoped in Christ  
have been destined and appointed  
to live forever for the praise of his glory.

In him you also, who have heard the word of truth  
the gospel of your salvation and have believed in him  
were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit  
who is the guarantee of our inheritance  
until we acquire possession of it  
to the praise of his glory."

Eph. 1, 3-14.



St. Paul, in this letter to the Ephesians, teaches us the nature of the Church, of that community of the faithful, called by God:

ch.1 : Called by the Father, called in Christ, called in the Holy Spirit.

ch.2 : Dowered with his gifts.

ch.3 : Measure the length, breadth, depth, height of this love.

ch.4 : So be united in one Body, every single member closely knit to the neighbour

Ch.5,6 : This applies to each category in the Church.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CALL

- "by the will of God". It is the Father who calls  
(6 times in this letter)
- "that we may be holy". Purpose of the call. 14 times.  
"holy" means whole, full, perfect, as your heavenly Father.
- "in HIM, in Christ, the CHRISTO-CENTRIC, the personal commitment and intimate partnership. 30 times in this letter.
- "before the foundation of the world", in the heart of Trinity, in the love that is eternal. What then can be the meaning of the so-called "temporary vocation"?
- "in the fulness of time": the Greek 'kairos', God chosen moment.
- "sealed with the Spirit": mark of ownership, of intimacy.

## NOTE THE TRINITARIAN DIMENSION OF OUR VOCATION

Called by the **Father**, called to intimacy in **Christ**, sealed with the **Spirit**.



**JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST APOSTLES Jn 1, 35-51**

Come to the river Jordan, and see this call come to life, as Jesus invites his first Apostles to partnership. Pay attention to the words 'look', 'see', especially as they are qualified in the Jerusalem Bible translation: looked straight, looked steadily.

**THE BAPTIST:**

And John bore witness:

"I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven and it remained on him.

I myself did not know him

but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me:

he on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain

this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

And I HAVE SEEN AND HAVE BORNE WITNESS  
THAT THIS IS THE SON OF GOD."

The next day, again John was standing

with two of his disciples,

and he looked hard at Jesus as he walked,

and exclaimed: "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!"

John is electrified, as he recognises Jesus as the whole meaning of his life. **John knows his identity!**

**ANDREW:**

The two disciples heard the Baptist say this,  
and they followed Jesus.

Jesus turned, saw them following and said to them:

"WHAT DO YOU SEEK"?

And they said to him: "Rabbi (which means teacher)  
where are you staying?"

He said to them: "COME AND SEE".

They came, saw where he was staying



(not the physical dwelling, surely! but his way of life)  
and they stayed with him that day,  
for it was about the tenth hour (4 in the evening).  
One of the two who heard John speak and followed him  
was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.  
He first found his brother Simon and said to him:  
"WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH" (which means Christ)  
and he brought him to Jesus

Andrew has realised the meaning of his call: JESUS THE  
MESSIAH!

**PETER:**

Jesus looked hard at him and said:  
(looked hard at the man his Father had chosen to be his first  
vicar on earth)  
"So you are Simon, son of John?  
YOU SHALL BE CALLED CEPHAS".

Jesus changed his name. In Hebrew this means a new identity,  
a new role in life — the rock!

**PHILIP:**

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee,  
And he found Philip and said to him:  
"Follow me". Now Philip was from Bethsaida,  
the city of Andrew and Peter.  
Philip found Nathaniel and said to him:  
"WE HAVE FOUND HIM OF WHOM MOSES IN THE  
LAW  
AND THE PROPHETS ALSO WROTE:  
JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE SON OF JOSEPH!"

For Philip Jesus is the one to whom Moses and the Prophets  
point!



**NATHANIEL:**

Nathaniel said to him:

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Philip said to him: "COME AND SEE".

Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him and he said:

"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile"!

(the old Israel, Jacob, was full of guile. This is the new Israel)

Nathaniel said to him: "HOW DO YOU KNOW ME?"

Jesus answered him:

"Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree I saw you".

Nathaniel answered him: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel."

Jesus answered him:

"Because I said to you I saw you under the fig tree do you believe?"

YOU SHALL SEE GREATER THINGS THAN THESE:

YOU SHALL SEE HEAVEN OPENED

AND THE ANGELS OF GOD ASCENDING AND  
DESCENDING

ON THE SON OF MAN!"

The meaning of your vocation, Nathaniel, is to realise Jesus as mediator between heaven and earth, that Jesus is Son of God and Son of Man!

\* \* \* \*

*"Religious life is not your property, any more than it is the property of an Institute. It is a 'gift of God, which the Church has received from her Lord and which by his grace she always safeguards." LG 43*

*Up to the evening of your life, remain in wonder and thanks giving for the mysterious call that re-echoed in the*



*depths of your heart one day: "Follow me. Sell all you have and give it to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, and COME FOLLOW ME!"*

*To begin with, you kept this call like a secret. Then you subjected it to the discernment of the Church. It is in fact a very great risk to leave everything to follow Christ; but already you felt, — and you have experienced since — that He is able to fill your heart!*

**"RELIGIOUS LIFE IS A FRIENDSHIP  
AN INTIMACY OF THE MYSTICAL ORDER  
WITH CHRIST"**

John Paul II  
to Women Religious in Paris  
31st, May 1980



## 4

### IDENTITY

#### Human, Christian, Religious Enrichment!

Vocation is the call to intimacy and partnership; so the Scriptures present it. But something is wrong today.

We have a crisis of vocations today, a crisis of identity; not only individual crises but crisis of the very meaning of religious life. So-called wise men and women are announcing the end of religious life, and religious are leaving in droves, or just not joining!

On the other hand, the II Vatican Council speaks of religious life as from seeds divinely planted, "based upon the words and example of the Lord" LG 43. "They imitate Christ the virgin



## Identity

and the poor man (Mt 8,20; Lk 9,58) who by an obedience that carried him even to the death of the cross..." P.C. 1

## PREFACE AT THE MASS FOR RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

...He came, the son of a virgin mother,  
named those blessed who were pure of heart,  
& taught by His whole life the perfection of chastity.

He chose always to fulfil your holy will,  
and became obedient even to dying for us,  
offering himself to you as a perfect oblation.

He consecrated more closely to your service  
those who leave all things for your sake,  
and promised that they would find a heavenly treasure. ....

## ALIENATION

There seems to be a sense of alienation among religious, a feeling of being 'foreigners' to themselves. "WHO AM I AS A RELIGIOUS? WHAT IS MY IDENTITY?"

Psychologists point to 5 basic concepts of alienation:

1. Powerlessness: I can do nothing worthwhile
2. Meaninglessness: What then is the meaning of my life?
3. Normlessness: Why not cut away from norms and rules?
4. Isolation: I find myself in a cut-off position, ALONE!
5. Self-estrangement: Who then am I, stranger to myself!

**WHY** does this arise?

because of frustration where I sought achievement.

because I feel crushed when I wanted to come  
out on top!

because I find myself alone, when I sought acceptance  
for my worth and value!



**WHEN** does this happen?

from the womb, where acceptance or rejection affect  
the whole of life.

at adolescence, as we know well,

at every important stage of growth and change:

25 when life should have its first achievement

35 the make-or-break stage, when we seek a  
new chance

45 menopause: 'I am no more a woman'?

65 retirement — on the heap, useless!

## **HUMAN, CHRISTIAN, RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT**

Can religious life, that call to deeper love, be shown in  
all its splendour, in its human, Christian, religious enrichment,  
and so counter this sense of alienation?

### **A. HUMAN IDENTITY**

There are three basic requirements of human fulfilment:

1. **to be myself** — to understand and commit myself freely  
in the full exercise of my faculties of intelligence and free  
will.

2. **to have:** talent, ability, material possessions,  
in order to do, to achieve something worthwhile  
in order TO BE: sense of self worth, and accepted as such.

3. **to be loved** for my own sake  
to love in return and be locked-in in love.

This human fulfilment is to be developed in the family circle.  
This is the task and the glory of the family.

Pick your vocations from such a milieu.



## B. CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

The three theological virtues, Faith, Hope, Love, lift the human to the divine:

1. **FAITH** gifts the intellect a vision, and offers the will a divine commitment. "I know whom I have believed, and I am sure he will honour the trust I place in him" 2 Tim 1.12
2. **HOPE** guarantees supreme possession and fulfilment in the commitment to Christ.

3. **LOVE** looks to the embrace of divinity!

The **Catholic Community** of faith, hope, love provides the milieu.

## C. RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND FULFILMENT in the three vows.

1. **FAITH-OBEDIENCE** directs mind and will to the vision of God and to a commitment to divinity
  2. **HOPE-POVERTY** guarantees supreme possession
  3. **LOVE-CHASTITY** locks us in the love of God himself.
- The religious community makes this achievement possible.

## D. THE CHARISM OF THE CONGREGATION

is that gift and grace, given to the Founders and to every person today called to this congregation — a particular 'pointing channel' of grace and life.

E. This human, Christian, religious **IDENTITY AND FULFILMENT** is found in the **FORMULA OF THE CROSS**. The Cross viewed not negatively, but positively:

- death **FOR** resurrection
- investment **FOR** achievement
- planting **FOR** growth
- obedience **FOR** faith vision
- poverty **FOR** hope possession
- chastity **FOR** love union!



### THE THREE DRY STICKS!

Could you believe that religious life could be pictured and written as a three-fold drying out of the person, as a three-fold mortification (death), that is then offered on the altar of sacrifice?

Chastity as a sacrifice of companionship and love —  
loneliness!

Poverty as an emptying out of all I can call my own —  
emptiness!

Obedience as being led blindly by command, the  
degradation of the human being created in the image  
& likeness of God!

THE THREE DRY STICKS, PLACED ON THE ALTAR OF  
SACRIFICE!

THE DRIER THEY ARE THE BETTER THEY BURN,  
AND THE SMOKE GOES UP TO GOD ...

Read Charles Davis, in the Catholic Herald of London 11  
Nov 68.

OFCOURSE THIS IS NO CHRISTIAN THEORY!  
NO ONE CAN LAST LIKE THIS.

THIS IS AN INSULT TO GOD WHO CALLS IN LOVE.

Religious life is positive, religious life is love, religious life  
is fulfilment.

CAN YOU SPELL OUT THE THREE POSITIVES?



## LET US PRAY

*Lord Jesus, you looked in love on the young man who came to you (Mk. 10, 17). Did you want to empty him of the very gifts you gave him? Were you inviting him for a collapse of all that is truly HUMAN, or were you inviting him to a FULFILMENT of all that is human, now drawn to your divinity?*

*You surely make no half gifts, Lord.  
Give me eyes to see, and a heart to appreciate.  
Give me the will to walk with you, in partnership.*



## RELIGIOUS LIFE

### Human, Christian, Religious ENRICHMENT

|           |                                                   |                                                  |                                                    |                                                            |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| HUMAN     | to be myself<br>to understand<br>to commit freely | to have<br>to do<br>TO BE                        | to love<br>& be loved,<br>wanted, accepted         | in family<br>community                                     |
| CHRISTIAN | to see<br>A VISION<br>& commit in<br>FAITH        | assurance<br>of supreme<br>possession<br>in HOPE | to be loved<br>& to love<br>consecrated<br>in LOVE | in Church<br>community                                     |
| RELIGIOUS | OBEDIENCE<br>of faith                             | POVERTY<br>of hope                               | CHASTITY<br>of love                                | in Religious family<br>at the heart of the<br>church LG 42 |

#### CHARISM

that special grace, family trait,  
inspiration and gift to the Foundress  
and to everyone called today to this Congregation  
pointing-channel of grace and life!

This human, Christian, Religious IDENTITY AND FULFILMENT is found in the

FORMULA OF THE CROSS :

|                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| death for resurrection | investment for achievement |
| obedience for faith    | VISION                     |
| poverty for hope       | POSSESSION                 |
| chastity for love      | UNION                      |



# 5

## HISTORY OF MY VOCATION

### Points for Recollection

*“Every woman religious must bear witness  
to the primacy of God  
and must dedicate a sufficiently long period  
of time, every day,  
to stand before the Lord,  
and tell him of her love,  
and above all to let herself be loved by him”.*

John Paul II



## THE HEART OF VOCATION

Not the introduction by spiritual father, relative or nun, as the Baptist to John and Andrew, or Andrew to Simon but the **direct** contact with the Lord: COME AND SEE!

So Andrew says: "We have found the MESSIAH!" John 1, 41

So Nathaniel says: "Rabbi YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD!" Jn 1, 49

What do I say?

## THE CONFLICT, BAFFLEMENT, PRICE!

When we stretch out to Divinity, there must be conflict.

The human cannot go smoothly to the divine.

"Sell **all** you have (talent, thirst for fulfilment ...) Mk 10, 21

When James and John come seeking first places Mt 20,20,

Jesus has his way of drawing them. Says St. John Chrysostom:

When Jesus says to them "Can you drink the chalice **that I shall drink?**" he is drawing them by his own example, so

that "when their lips meet at the same cup they are quite ready" as though he says: Come, we shall drink the chalice

together; first sip for me, second sip for you! They look at him, they look at each other, and then say: "We can".

## ENCHANTMENT - ELATION

From the French "chanter", a song in my heart!

With the growing years, has there been at some time a deeper assurance, a continuing assurance:

"YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD, MY SPOUSE"!

Sing out your joy to the Lord.



## 6

# COME, MEET THE REDEEMER

*Meeting a person means exchanging values, His and mine  
sharing feelings,  
comparing commitments.*

## HIS VERY NAME IS JESUS

In Hebrew the name reveals the person, his nature, his role in life, his thinking, his feel, his drive in life!

“You shall call Him Jesus  
for He will save his people from their sins”. Mt. 1,21

**HIS THINKING** - revealed in his parables of forgiveness:  
A parable is precious. It is not merely a story.  
It is his thinking, the point He makes (parabola: throw-point)



LUKE 15:

THE LOST SHEEP: Which man? No man, Lord!

THE LOST COIN: Which woman? Only the foolish woman!

THE LOST SON: Which father? God alone!

We are people of 'majority', of quantity!

When 99% are safe, why worry about the one?

**NOT JESUS:**

"I know mine and mine know me.

I call them by name. They hear my voice" Jn 10,27

**HE IS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT THE LEAST OF THEM!**

"Those Thou hast given me.

Not one is lost, except the one who chose to be lost" Jn 17,11

Like the woman in the parable -  
not complete if one of the 'coins' of her  
marriage necklace is lost!

**TOTAL CONFESSIONS**

The woman who was a sinner Lk 7 - attracted by His love.

The woman caught in adultery Jn 8 - dragged by the hair.

The woman at the well. Jn 4 - Jesus went for her, and how!

"The Lord turned and looked **straight at Peter**  
and Peter went out and wept bitterly". Lk 22, 61

"Friend, have you come to this...Judas are you betraying the  
Son of Man with a kiss?" Mt 26, Lk 22



## HIS ONE CONDITION

The parable of the Unforgiving Servant Mt 18

The hyperbole - 10,000 talents, impossible sum!

He forgave the debt! Is this the nature of forgiveness?

"You wicked servant" - So much against His nature!

"That is how my heavenly Father will deal with you, unless you each forgive your brother (sister)

**FROM YOUR HEART!"**

- He taught us to pray: "Forgive us our sins **as we forgive** those.. Mt 6,12
- "If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift". Mt 5,23

**MEET THE REDEEMER**

**MEET THE DIVINITY IN THE REDEEMER**

**LEARN TO FORGIVE!**

**HIS NAME IS JESUS!**



# 7

## TOTAL REDEEMING LOVE

Divine, Human, Individual

Lk 7,36-50

Pope John Paul II, in his first Encyclical Letter **THE REDEEMER OF MAN**, speaks of the three dimensions of redeeming love: Divine, Human, Individually concrete.

### **DIVINE DIMENSION para 9**

“God is love. Love is greater than sin, greater than weakness, it is stronger than death; it is a love always ready to raise up and forgive, always ready to go to meet the prodigal, always looking for the revealing of the sons of God, who are called to the glory to be revealed. This revelation of love is



also described as mercy, and in man's history, this revelation of love and mercy has taken a form and a name: that of Jesus Christ."

### **HUMAN DIMENSION para 10**

"Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless if love is not revealed to him; if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate in it.

This is why Christ the Redeemer 'fully reveals man to himself.... makes him find again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity. In the mystery of the redemption man becomes newly expressed and in a way newly created.

How precious man must be in the eyes of the Creator if he gained so great a Redeemer and if God gave His only Son in order that man should not perish but have eternal life."

### **CHRIST UNITED HIMSELF WITH EACH MAN para 13**

"Man as willed by God, as chosen by him from all eternity and called, destined for grace and glory — that is **each** man, the most **concrete** man, the most **real**; this is man in all the fulness of the mystery in which he has become a sharer in Jesus Christ; the mystery in which **each** one of the four thousand million human beings living on our planet has become a sharer, from the moment he is conceived beneath the heart of his mother."



With this introduction of the Holy Father, let us contemplate the Redeemer in action, as revealed in the Gospel of St. Luke 7, 36-50.

"One of the Pharisee's asked Jesus to eat with him, and He went into the Pharisee's house and sat at table.

And behold a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was sitting at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself "if this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner".

And Jesus answering said to him: "Simon, I have something to say to you". He answered "What is it, Teacher?"

"A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, the other fifty. When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more".

And Jesus said to him "You have judged rightly". Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you her sins, which are many must



have been forgiven for she loves much: but he who is forgiven little loves little." And he said to her "Your sins are forgiven".

Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves "Who is this, who even forgives sins?"

And he said to the woman "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

\* \* \* \*

The woman who was a sinner, says Luke. Let us not try to give her a name. She has lost her good name, she has lost all her dignity and beauty of woman. She is a prostitute, and Simon the Pharisee spits out: "She is a sinner"

Jesus is invited by the Pharisee, and he takes his place at table. He has not come for the Pharisee, surely! He has come in spite of knowing that he would be insulted at his very entry: no water, no welcoming kiss of peace, no oil for his hair.

No, he has not come for the Pharisee!

When the woman hears that he was at the Pharisee's house, she comes, attracted by what she has heard of his attitude to sinners; she has come because, as Luke clearly says, He has begun to work in her heart. She comes with her alabaster flask of ointment.

**SHE STANDS AT THE DOOR** - all eyes on her! Dare she enter?

But she has eyes only for Jesus. For the rest she stands empty, she stands defiant, knowing what they have made her, knowing how they hunger for her and yet despise her and themselves!



She stands hard and empty — hard as sin, hard as lust, all tenderness gone. This is what sin has done - broken her humanity, removed real love from her life.

### NO ONE DARE SAY A WORD!

- Invited by the look of Jesus, she goes straight to his feet,
- there to empty out her heart in response to his love (much has been forgiven her, so she loves much).
  - there to taste the divine dimension of tireless love, “greater than sin, greater than weakness, stronger than death, always ready to raise up and forgive”.
- sorrow in tears that wash away sin, bound in love that kisses his feet, sealed like the precious ointment she pours out!

### THE HUMAN DIMENSION — THE DIALOGUE WITH SIMON

The Pharisee said **within himself**. He was too much of a coward to speak openly. But he was to encounter the human Jesus who speaks openly and in strength.

“Simon I have something to say to you”.

Completely unsuspecting, Simon says: “Say on, Master”  
There follows the parable, oriental style.

Simon again unaware of what was to come: “I suppose....”

### THEN COMES THE BARRAGE

“DO YOU SEE THIS WOMAN”!

Yes, says Simon, again within himself. I see that woman! Who gave her the nerve to come into my house, uninvited? Who gave her the nerve to make you the centre, and push us all aside? She is a sinner!

But Jesus’ thinking is altogether different:



## Total Redeeming Love

I came into your house,  
- you gave me no water for my feet  
  she has washed my feet with her tears.  
- you gave me no kiss of peace,  
  she has not ceased kissing my feet.  
- you gave me no oil for my hair  
  she has anointed my feet, with ointment!

At each point of the comparison, Simon goes down, the woman lifted up.

### AND THE CLIMAX:

"Therefore I tell you her sins, her many sins, must have been forgiven her, for she loves much! BUT HE WHO IS FORGIVEN LESS LOVES LESS!" that is you, Simon!

The woman lifts her head. He is building her as a human being! in front of the very men who have emptied her. He is building her higher than them!

Love is entering her life again,  
She can make it her own, true love, pure love.  
Her life has meaning and dignity again.  
Her humanity is built up by the Redeemer of Man!

### CONCRETELY INDIVIDUAL

"Your sins are forgiven"  
They start grumbling, always within themselves.  
But Jesus has nothing for them.  
He turns to the woman.

**THIS IS BETWEEN HIM AND HER ALONE**  
**A ONE TO ONE RELATIONSHIP!**

"Go in peace, your faith has made you whole"



YOUR FAITH - your commitment to Me  
following my commitment to you;  
your life is locked in mine.  
you are loved by the Almighty!

Do you see their eyes meet?  
Do you see the light in her eyes, the love in her heart?  
Do you see the NEW WOMAN, TOTALLY NEW,  
BUILT BY THE REDEEMER?  
with his divinity  
in her humanity  
individually built!

### PRAYER

*Lord, Jesus, Redeemer, let me taste your total redeeming love.*

First:

*in its divine dimension: Your Father's never tiring love,  
forgiving me again and again.*

*Do you never tire of forgiving me, Lord?  
No one forgives as You do!*

*Your right hand resting on my head assures me,  
as You repeat your prayer to the Father:  
"Father forgive them, they know not what they do".  
making impossible excuses for the sinner you love.*



Total Redeeming Love

*Second:*

*You build our humanity again when you forgive.*

*You did not become man for nothing.*

*You know how sin destroys the humanity gifted to me:*

*how hard I grow in my disobedience,*

*aloof and empty and low in my impurity,*

*cut off and unbearable in my uncharity.*

*Can your forgiveness mean that love will build me up again?*

*- love in my heart to gift to others,*

*- a sense of Reality in obedience*

*- peace in a consecrated partnership with you.*

*Lock me in friendship with you.*

*Alone with you and you with me.*

*One to one,*

*face to face,*

*heart to heart!*



## 8

### REMEMBER ME

Lk 23, 33-43

**What it takes to Redeem!**

The way we speak of sorrow for sin, makes it sound easy. St. Bernard, however, has deeper thoughts:

1. In the first place the individual **loves himself for his own sake.**
2. However, when he finds that he cannot subsist by himself alone, he begins the search for God by faith and love, as necessary for himself. Thereby on the second level, **he loves God for his sake**, but not so fully for God's sake.



Remember Me

3. But once having tasted how sweet God is, he passes on to the third degree where he loves God, not just on account of himself, but **truly for God's sake**. On this level of love of God he finds stability.
4. And I doubt if anyone can be found in this life who has attained the fourth degree of love so that **he loves himself on account of God**.

De Diligendo Deo.  
XV PL 182, 998

IS IT THAT DIFFICULT TO LET GO OF SELF LOVE?  
TO MOVE OUT OF SELF, RIGHT TO THE  
LOVE OF GOD?

The sinner chooses his false values, and is locked within himself. Even when those values crumble he will not let go! After all it was his choice! His pride sticks to his choice!

Accuse him - he closes upon himself the more. Knowledge of his guilt and the punishment deserved, makes him shout: "Save me as I am".

HOW DO YOU BRING SUCH A MAN OUT OF HIMSELF,  
TO GOD?  
NOT FROM THE TOP, SURELY!  
NO, YOU NEED AN **IN-CARNATE REDEEMER!**

**LUKE 23, 33-43**

I meet Jesus going up to Calvary, the cross firmly on His shoulder, His step quite determined. "I must go right to the top", He says, "There is one who will need me there, crucified like himself".



**CRUCIFIXION** is awful suffering, not only physically, but personally.

**physically:**

Cicero the Roman orator calls it: "the most terrible torment" (teterrimum durissimumque supplicium) the nails go through the median nerve, the fingers react in a nervous clasp. Hanging on outstretched hands, at 45 degrees, induces a chest constriction that makes breathing impossible. To relieve the congestion the crucified has to bring himself up on his nailed hands. The pain is throbbing and he sags again on congested chest.

**But humanly** it is more crucifying still!

a punishment reserved for criminals. He belongs to a cut-off group. Everyone in that crowd points the finger: Criminal! He is stripped in public, stripped to shame him. He will hang publicly, between heaven and earth. He is not fit for human burial — let the carrion birds and beasts have his corpse.

**HE IS A NON-PERSON!**

Within himself, he knows he deserves it. He is locked in with his sense of guilt. He can look for no human sympathy, only rejection!

and JESUS COMES OUT, IN FULL KNOWLEDGE OF HIS CONDITION COMES OUT TO MEET HIM IN HIS CRUCIFIED STATE THE ONLY WAY POSSIBLE — GET CRUCIFIED WITH HIM AND FOR HIM! THIS IS LOVE! "He loved me, He gave Himself up for me".

Gal. 2.20



Remember Me

## THE EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE CRIMINALS

They have Jesus between them and yet what different reactions!

### THE ONE ON THE LEFT:

"If you are the Christ, save yourself and us"!

His sin, the knowledge of his guilt,

His sense of rejection accentuating the guilt,

His awful physical punishment!

HE IS LOCKED WITHIN HIMSELF:

He can think only of himself!

### THE ONE ON THE RIGHT:

What drew him out of himself?

The forgiving prayer of Jesus, the one word  
of divinity on that hill of hate!

The dignified behaviour in face of insults,

The title on the Cross "The king...

HE COMES OUT: "Do you not fear God...

We suffer justly

this man has done nothing wrong"

JESUS, REMEMBER ME"

Did Jesus draw him by a look of love?

What did that look say?

"I know what you are suffering. I placed myself here  
for you.

I understand. COME."

AND HE SAID: "JESUS REMEMBER ME!"



### THE ROYAL ANSWER:

"I PROMISE YOU" - tone of assurance

"Today" - immediate

"You will be with Me" - partnership.

When I shall be lifted up, I shall draw  
all men to myself" Jn 12,32. And He does!

No, the thief was not taken down.

Yet, he was saved!

Saved out of himself,

to Jesus,

TO DIVINITY!

### PRAYER

*Jesus, Redeemer,  
teach me the power of sin that locks me in my self love,  
enforced by my sense of guilt,  
still further enforced by what I suffer,  
and the sense of rejection!*

*How I cling to myself, excusing myself,  
condemning those who reject me,  
the prisoner's syndrome (my self prison)*

*Save me, Lord,  
save me from this prison,  
save me out of myself  
TO YOU!*



## 9

### LIFE IS A PERSON

“I am the Resurrection  
and the Life”

Jn 11,25

### DEATH OF A PRIEST

What manner of man was this, whose hands they are so reverently crossing now upon his breast, whose glazing eyes they are so gently closing. What manner of man was this, who stands now naked and stripped of pretence, beneath the terrible all- revealing light of God's justice!

Was he a man who sinned once and sinned again, until it no longer seemed sin, but an inescapable weakness of nature;



until he no longer bothered to mention it in confession, or glossed it over until it seemed but a peccadillo; a man in whom conscience, so often betrayed, finally turned traitor itself, so that compunction died and the complacency of atrophy reigned, and sacrilegious Mass after sacrilegious Mass piled up to his account? Is this the man of secret sin, of whom even now those about the bed are saying: He was such a good priest; surely he'll go right to heaven.

And even while they say it, he has been judged; he has seen the searing truth — not God, but himself through God's eyes — the darkness where there should be light, the emptiness where there should be love.

He was such a good priest, they say; and even as they are dusting off their knees, the unconsuming fire of hell is upon him; the awful burning thirst for the Love which he has forever cast away; the desperate, hopeless, racking hunger for God whom he must find or perish; and he cannot find Him, yet he cannot perish... Yes, he is in hell, this man who so often made a mockery of God's grace.

But didn't he have the sacraments at the end? Didn't he make an act of contrition and receive absolution for his sins? He knows now, too late, that it isn't as easy as that. Grace so often rejected is not so easily conjured at will. It wasn't sorrow that gave such vehemence to his last act of contrition. He wasn't sorry, only scared; scared with an awful fright at the possibility of death and what it might mean. But even in his desperation he couldn't throw himself, in one last and real act of love, at the foot of the Cross; he had been out of practice too long!

So they dressed him in purple vestments, and the Bishop came to celebrate his requiem and they laid him away. He



helped a lot of other people towards heaven; he offered Masses for their intentions, absolved their sins; fed them on the Bread of life, preached the Gospel to them, assisted them to die; God, whose arm is not foreshortened by His human instruments, let His graces flow freely and without contamination through these sin-calloused hands; so that souls were saved; yet he who saved them is in Hell.

Let us hope that the whole thing is a flight of morbid imagination — an eventuality that never happens. But it could happen, it could happen even to me!

Leo Trese: A Man Approved 147

### I KNOW WHERE I AM GOING

The Catholic Superintendent of the Central Prison phoned me to say that there was a young Catholic sentenced to death. "But he does not want to see a priest"!

I have a partner in my apostolate, an old FMM nun, who has spent about 50 years in India. I phoned her: "Sr. Miguela, I have a case for you," and I told her the story. Very simply she said: "I'll go". The next day she phoned back: "He will see you". Just one visit from this woman of God!

The man I met was a poorly educated villager from the districts involved in the murder of four men who were axed to death. He was caught trying to set fire to the hut in which the bodies were. From the beginning he said that he had done it... right up to the sentence of the High Court condemning him to death. Then he reversed himself: I did not do it!

I quieted the man; and promised all the help that could be given. I visited him in his cell every Sunday. What do you say to a man in such a situation. I prayed hard for light, and light came.



On my next visit, I told him the story of the **THREE WHO WERE ON CALVARY**: the one on the right appealing to the **ONE** in the centre, and the reply of the **ONE** in the centre: "I promise you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Lk 23,33-43

Sunday after Sunday the lesson was repeated, while the process of appealing went on..... Supreme Court, and when that failed, the appeal for clemency to the President of the Republic.

Time passed, my homily was repeated unfailingly. He made his confession, he received Holy Communion, he quietened down. Nearly two years had elapsed, and we were still waiting for the answer of the President.

Then the Superintendent phoned me: "I have the answer: the President has turned down the appeal. In a few days the written order for execution will come. You have only two or three days left."

I went to meet my man at once. The odd day, the odd hour conveyed the message. I said Mass for him in his cell, the homily was repeated, his confession was heard again, he received Communion. "Is there something special you want", I asked. "Get me the Bishop's blessing, and don't let me be buried in that open plot behind the jail".

The Bishop is a good pastor. He went personally to visit my man in full red sash and pectoral cross, blessed him and promised: "I will conduct your funeral myself and to sacred ground".

On the eve of the day fixed, I went again to say Mass in his cell, and gave him a six inch gilt crucifix: **THE ONE IN THE CENTRE!** "I will be there at 5.30 in the morning"



I said. "You must come earlier" he replied, "the drop is at 6 a.m."

At 5 a.m. I was at the jail, which was all lit up, over 3000 prisoners in their barracks alert to the hanging. I signed the book at the entrance and was told to wait for the Superintendent. He came in a few minutes from within the jail. "Your man is nervous" he said. "Naturally" I replied. "I will go to him".

I reached the special double cell, securely double-locked! "Open the door", I said. The door could not be opened I was told, and for my sake! "Forget my safety" I insisted, "Open the door". They opened. I went in, and he came like a child and held my hand.

I opened the statue I was carrying, an eighteen inch head of the Crucified Christ of Limpias, and placed it on a low stool. He gasped. He knelt before the Crucified. "This is a statue" I told him. "Now tell me the story of THE THREE ON CALVARY", and childlike he repeated the story he had heard every week for nearly three years:

Who was the ONE in the middle?

What did the one on the right say to the One in the middle?

What answer did he get?

I PROMISE YOU, TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME...

"Sebastian, today has come, and He will keep his promise." He asked to make his confession again. I gave him Communion, and then I said: "Forget us all. He is with you! He closed his eyes, folded his hands and communed with THE ONE IN THE CENTRE!

Suddenly he opened his eyes, turned to the prison guards and said: "I am alright, I know where I am going".



A little later the Superintendent came in. He stood up, saluted the Superintendent and repeated: "Sir, I am alright. I know where I am going." I was gratefully following the action of grace.

The formalities were gone through: he signed acceptance of his sentence, he donated his eyes, and we moved swiftly out of the cell. Before climbing the ramp leading to the platform for the hanging, I stopped him and gave him the six inch crucifix to kiss. "You take it now," he said "else it will drop".

"No, it will not drop. He will not let go of you" (actually a dying person clutches on tightly to what he holds).

He went up the ramp, I followed. As he reached the top, the first order rang out and the rope was clipped in place. The second order rang out, and as 6 o'clock struck, he dropped.... or should I say he went up! I was reciting the prayer: "Depart Christian Soul...."

The attending doctor declared him dead. The visiting doctor from Bombay carefully removed his eyes and left by train for the hospital where four people would benefit from his gift.

The Bishop met the funeral hearse at the door of the Cathedral, in full pontifical vestments. The children sang the service. The rain for which we were praying came down in torrents (one of the intentions for which he had offered his life), and he was laid to rest in hallowed ground.

The Hindu Assistant Superintendent said to me later: "You had a terrific hold on that man"! Humbly I answered: "Not I. That is religion".



WHAT A WAY TO GO!  
I KNOW WHERE I AM GOING.  
TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE.  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LORD!

### **LIFE IS A PERSON**

**Turn to the Gospel of St. John chapter 6.** Jesus is promising his own body and blood in the Eucharist, and three times he joins it up with life at the last day:

v 37: "All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out.... for this is the will of my Father that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up in the last day".

v 51: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever, and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh".

v 54: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up in the last day."

**Turn to chapter 11 of St. John,** and hear him say to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" v 25

These words the Church repeats at every funeral, to renew our faith and hope in the Risen Christ who will raise us up.

**Turn to chapter 17 of St. John** and hear Jesus in his priestly prayer to the Father at the Last Supper:



“Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me, before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and these know that thou hast sent me. I made known to them thy name, and I will make it known, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them”. 24 sqq

Life is a Person, who when promising the Eucharist, at the Eucharistic table is our life support, now and for eternity.

I was called upon to celebrate the funeral Mass for a doctor friend who died suddenly. What text should I choose for the Gospel except St. John chapter 6. The house was filled with Catholics and non Catholics, people whom doctor had served so faithfully. “Freddie, I said, had attended Mass often and heard this text. Now the Lord of life and death will fulfill his promise: I will raise him up in the last day. At communion time I will lift this Jesus and say to each communicant: May the Body and Blood of Christ bring you to eternal life. And you will answer AMEN, this is my faith in the Son of God!.”

How the Church brings this full teaching in a simple hymn:

“O sacred banquet, in which Christ is made our food,  
The memory of his passion is renewed,  
The soul is filled with grace,  
And there is given us a pledge of eternal glory.”



## WHY SHOULD DEATH BE SUDDEN?

Not only are we not told the time of our death, but Scripture speaks of his coming like a thief (Rev.3.3). What can be the meaning of this mysterious coming?

1. He is the Lord, you may say. Do not question his ways! But he is no tyrant surely. He does not want to catch us unprepared!

2. Given the power of sin in us and the attraction, if we were given the date we would postpone repentance to the last. We would promise ourselves grace at the last, where the Church is distinctly teaching that the grace of perseverance is a GRACE to which we have no right. Final perseverance is a special grace. (Council of Trent Decree on Justification, chapter 13)

3. But when we come to hear the Saints speak, we come to the heart of the matter. St. Hilary of Poitiers says: "It is not for nothing that the Lord has kept 'that day' hidden from us all.

The Lord wants us to keep watch for his coming like a thief, caught up in the all-engaging life of prayer, faithful in the observance of his commandments. Let us be prepared! Our not knowing the day keeps us on the tip-toe of expectation — awaiting the Beloved". Come Lord, do not delay!

St. Paul says: "My desire is to depart and to be with Christ." Phil 1,23. making of death the completion of life, the final goal and beginning of eternal happiness.

## VIEWS OF DEATH

1. When he was in bed and in the dark he understood the mystery of death, which was just a solemn pause, during



which you had to be still and stop breathing like the flowers, and after a bit you were more alive than ever!

2. The Falling Autumn Leaves: They know how to die. A little way from the branch to the earth, a little fear of mingling with the common dust — and yet they go down gracefully — a fall that seems almost like flying!

3. Ned Halley's soul rose from the menial ash of body and leapt in flame to join the fellowship of saints, martyrs and confessors.

4. In loving and sacred memory of Fr. Martin Durach sj, parish priest of St. Joseph's Church, Panchgani for 18 years, who dying at the altar, passed from the veiled presence of the God of the Holy Eucharist, to the unveiled vision of Him whom he had so long and faithfully served.

5. Let God be glorified in his death, let those around be edified by his acceptance of the divine will, by his faith, hope and love of the eternal rewards. So the Jesuit is taught.

### PREPARING FOR THE "END OF THE WORLD"

The local paper had announced in no uncertain terms the day and time for the end of the world, and people were flocking to the local Parvati Hill Temple. The Catholics came to the parish priest, wanting a Holy Hour to prepare.

The Holy Hour was planned to end one hour before "the end of the world". As the last hymn was sung, the parish priest said to his people: "The end of the world is supposed to come in one hour from now. Where does God want you at that moment? Here in Church? Perhaps he may want me here, or better visiting the sick in the hospital. But you fathers of families, you have come straight from work to the Holy Hour. Go home, take your bath, get into your slippers,



take your cup of tea and relax. If God wants you he will take you like that.

You mothers of families, get to your kitchens and prepare the supper. If God wants you he will take you like that. You children, off to your books. If God wants you he will take you like that."

He could have gone on: You religious, off to where obedience calls at this moment. If God wants you he will take you like that. Actually he was paraphrasing the Gospel: Lk 12,42 "Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of goods at the proper time. Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing."

### LIFE AFTER DEATH

A week after the sudden death of her husband, the widow asked: "Father, where is Freddie"?

"Sophie" I said "when you were proposing to Freddie, did you ever feel you were not worthy of him?"

"Oh, sure", she answered.

"Well, this is what Freddie is now feeling, that he is not worthy of God for whom he is longing. That is why he willingly undergoes the state of purification the Church calls Purgatory — an intense desire for God joined with a readiness to purify ourselves in order to be one with Him".

A very active member of the parish had died at the ripe old age of 92. All her life she had been 'doing' for the parish and for the poor. A month after her death, her daughter (also busy in parish work) asks: "What is mummy doing in heaven? Sitting and looking at God? You knew mummy!"



"Con", I said, "did you ever observe your dad and mum in their latter days, sitting side by side in the garden, she with her knitting (the needles scarcely moving), he with his magazine (the page not turning): They did not say much, and yet HOW THEY WERE PRESENT TO ONE ANOTHER! How they relished those times of silent sharing! Was not that communing, a whole personal exchange"?

### LET US PRAY

*My crucified and dying Jesus, what love was it that brought you the eternal, immortal Son of God to become a mortal man and die for me?*

*You know well what a puzzle death is to the wise of this world, who either deny any meaning to it other than the material extinction of our mortal coil; or postpone the problem by positing repeated lives!*

*You know what a terror death can be for the sinner who has knowingly lived away from your love. Death he fears, when he should fear sin!*

*But the repentant sinner you call from the cross, and "he knows where he is going"!*

*The Church teaches me that "by dying you destroyed our death, and by rising you restored our life".*

*Make my life a partnership with you, weak partner that I am! Make my life a close living with you that will rob death of all its fears; why even keep me "on the tip-toe of expectation" waiting for you my beloved Redeemer.*

*Teach me to go to the Father, dying as you did: "Into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit".*



## 10

### HIS SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

*You have met the Redeemer.  
You have felt His divinity.  
He has touched your humanity.*

WHAT THEN IS THE PROBLEM WITH **HIS** SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION? That there is a problem is very evident. The Holy Father called a Synod of Bishops to meet the problem. He himself sits in the confessional in St. Peter's.



*CAN THE HUMAN INSTRUMENT BE DIVINE?  
CAN HE EVEN BE HUMAN ENOUGH?*

*ARE WE MISSING OUT ON THE PERSONAL?  
ARE WE STUCK ON THE PERIPHERY OF  
SACRAMENTAL FORMALISM OR ROUTINE?*

*"Give us a man who will be Christ!"*

*"Give us a penitent with faith!"*

*Give us a relationship between the two  
that will strengthen both!*

*Can the faith of the penitent build the Confessor?*

### **THE PERSONAL**

**The Easter Gift.** It was on the first Easter evening that Jesus Christ our Crucified and Risen Lord, victor over sin and death, wanting to communicate to the members of His Mystical Body, for all time, that same victory and triumph, instituted the Sacrament of His love for sinners, the Sacrament of their death to sin, the Sacrament of their reconciliation to the Father. "Receive the Holy Spirit..." In 20,20

Come to the upper room. You can see the strain-lines on His face, His victory is dearly bought. Yet it is victory!

He communicates HIS SACRAMENTAL GRACE: His obedience to the Father at a price (Rom 5,19) against sin and death, against the world, the flesh and pride.

### **TO THE CHURCH**

Why can we not go straight to God?

Because God did not come straight to us! He came in Christ. Christ is in His Church. The line of communication



## His Sacrament Of Reconciliation

is clear: **God in Christ** in the **Church** today, in His **minister** in the confessional.

“Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven.”

Not merely a prayer of petition: “May Almighty God have mercy...”

But the word of **command** in the sacrament:

“I forgive you...,  
and we know God’s forgiveness has reached us.

Sacramental forgiveness in the confessional is the forum of the great Judge of the living and the dead; only here it is a judgment of mercy and forgiveness.

### PERSONAL

This is the most personal of all the sacraments. Even in the Eucharist we have material signs of bread and wine. Here we have the acts of the penitent and the confessor: Contrition, Confession, Satisfaction, Absolution.

We must break through metaphors. Sin is not a stain, removed by washing, even sacred washing ‘in the blood of the Lamb’. Forgiveness is not by magical formula of power!

SIN IS DECISION, rejection of love for false values

SORROW IS DECISION, return to Love again.

FORGIVENESS IS DECISION of Love accepting us again.

### FIVE DECISIONS IN A DIALOGUE OF SIN AND FORGIVENESS

1. **God offers us love and friendship** if we keep His commandments. “If you love me keep my commandments, as I love the Father and keep His commandments”.

Jn 15,10



The values in the commandments are to build up the person in relationship with God.

We do not break the commandments, they break us if we disregard them. We break off our relationship with God, and we break ourselves in the process.

2. **The sinner's decision: BREAKING OFF** — I will not serve I have other 'values'.

In the state of sin, the sinner is living on her own, with her 'values'. But these, like 'Dead Sea Fruit' turn to dust when plucked. So she is left in a cut-off position, empty, with values that corroded.

e.g. the stubborn, disobedient way brings disaster!  
the sticky 'friendship' is demanding, lustful!

What will the sinner do?

"Without me you can do nothing". Jn 15,5  
Less than nothing in the cut-off state of sin!

3. **God's decision of Love:**  
**accusing:** you are wrong  
**INVITING TO PARDON AND LOVE**

Both St. John and St. Paul extol this love. 1 Jn 4,10;  
Rom 5,6

"When we were sinners God sent His only begotten Son!"  
He sent Him crucified!

**THE CRUCIFIED:** 1. reveals the extent to which God is willing to go to reconcile the sinner.

**THE CRUCIFIED:** 2. reveals "of what great weight is sin" Anselm



THE CRUCIFIED: 3. reveals what man is meant to be like: obedient through suffering. Hebr 5.

HIS CROSS is a judgment **ON** sin  
His cross is judgment **OF** mercy

4. When we accept God's accusation and invitation, we make our decision of **CON TRITION**. We fall in with God. This is **CON VERSION**: turning away from sin, turning right round to God. Contrition and conversion are acts done with God's lead.
5. So we make it possible for God to receive us in love. **THIS DECISION OF FORGIVENESS** is best expressed in the parable of the Prodigal Son. This is the meaning of the formula of absolution.

NOTHING IS MAGICAL : sacred washing  
sacred blood  
sacred formula

ALL IS PERSONAL — in a dialogue with the God of Love.

## SIN AND SORROW

We possibly spend too much time on the examination of conscience. And yet, we are bound to confess only MORTAL sins — the life- and-death decisions of our life! Times and circumstances are meant to bring out the bound-condition of the sinner; not to be torture!

The only 'unforgivable sin' is that of despair. The 'sin against the Holy Spirit', so called because we do not go to the Spirit of forgiving love. How then can we be forgiven? Every sin can be forgiven



The most important part of our preparation is **SORROW FOR SIN** and we possibly spend too little time on this.

There are three kinds of sorrow:

TRITION  
ATTRITION  
CONTRITION

1. The word **trition** from the Latin means 'ground down', crushed, anguished. The reasons could be various, but they are all grouped round 'myself', and can manifest self-kicking, useless regret, 'worm of conscience'.

a. I lose my temper in community, dish out a piece of my mind and sweep off! All alone, trition starts: "What a fool I made of myself, how shall I meet them now...?"

b. "Curse the moment I did the forbidden thing, when just 'she' should be looking! Ass that I am (for getting caught, ofcourse)".

c. St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that "after sexual arousal the animal in us is ground down to the dust, sad, morose". How could I have descended to that! What a degradation!

Triton keeps me wrapped round myself, with no approach to God.

2. **ATTRITION** implies a drawing out of myself to... In Church usage it is "sorrow for sin because of the threatening punishments of **God**". But it must be purified from a servile fear (which has self or motive: He will punish me!) to the selfless: "He, the judge who was crucified for me, will be forced to punish me for whom He died, whom He loves."



This attrition, with confession, says the Council of Trent is sufficient for the forgiveness of mortal sin.

3. CONTRITION completely removes from self, and takes me fully to God. The motive is love: the Loving Crucified Saviour, the long suffering Father. 'Big' sinners can be moved to perfect contrition. The bargaining 'small' person...?! Says the Lord: "I wish you were either hot or cold..."  
Apoc 3,16

**THE SUBTLETIES OF SORROW** Counsellors warn that at times there can be the ambiguity of being sorry for the sin, but not for the effect of the sin. e.g. I lost my temper and lashed out at... I am sorry for my anger, but not sorry that she learnt not to 'play' with me, or, I intentionally let myself go into sexual excitement by reading and re-reading details of a sex scene. Ambiguity: I am sorry for the excitement, but I have learned a lot about 'life'!

### THE DIALOGUE OF CONFESSING

Let me share with you something from the confessor's side.

A group of Sisters were getting nothing from their regular confessions. "He comes, regularly, finishes the 14 of us in 20 minutes and goes".

You know what was happening? He comes, sits handkerchief at his forehead. They come in one after another and say: "fss, fss, fss." He says "fss, fss, fss". What is fss? Little nothings! They say little nothings, he answers little nothings, and both are frustrated!



Here are some of the little nothings:

“Bless me Father...” He has already blessed their shadows entering, but he dare not say: Sister I have blessed you already. “It is a fortnight since my last confession”. He knows that very well, since he comes every fortnight.

#### AND THE LITTLE BASKET OF FOUR NOTHINGS!

1. distracted in prayer
2. uncharitable
3. disobeyed
4. had “thoughts”

the order is constantly jumbled for variety!

#### NOTHINGS ?!?!?

1. Acts. No mention of **motive**, of **attitudes**! Do they realise the importance of a **life of prayer**?
2. Did you notice the omission of a fundamental step to charity:  
JUSTICE, that exacting virtue, giving each her God-given right?
3. Charity is an attitude of self-gift. Is this uncharity just passing impatience, or is it rooted hostility, boring in...?
4. Again obedience is an attitude towards God's will, honoured in and to be found with the Superior.
5. Chastity is Life with a Person! and that Person the Incarnate Son of God! Thoughts will come, even unbidden. Or are we fanning the flame?

The confessor is in a delicate role. The penitent is on her knees, testifying against herself. He must let God's grace flow without let or hindrance! And yet, how often he would



wish they would be more forthright, using clear even harsh terms which would show the detestation of sin, rather than circumlocutions!

**SHOULD THE CONFESSOR ASK QUESTIONS IN CONFESSION?** The Church warns him not to ask one question too many. The essential question is about the sincerity of sorrow for sin. If he has a reasonable doubt on this point and it persists, he must warn the penitent "I want to forgive you, as God wants, as God sees you contrite, no more, no less". This is called a conditional absolution.

### **PENANCE**

She is sorry, she is penitent, and yet she is given a **PENANCE!** Can this be the sacrament of loving forgiveness?

The Church teaches that if the contrition is thorough, there is no need to give a penance!

The purpose of penance is to bring contrition to full value, to help root out the habits of sin, and at the highest, **TO DRAW US TO MATCH OUR LOVE WITH THE LOVE OF THE CRUCIFIED!**

Can this be dialogued with the penitent? Can the penance be made meaningful, according to the nature of the sin and the disposition of the penitent under grace, drawing on to the fullness of love?



## PARDON AND PEACE

“Go in peace” says the confessor. Do not doubt the love that forgives

**JUDAS - PETER COMPLEX.** Again the counsellor warns: learn to love yourself, not to hate yourself, for God has forgiven you. Weep peacefully like Peter, face to face with his Crucified Lord. Do not hate yourself like Judas who destroyed himself in what may look like a dramatic gesture... when all the while the Master was waiting for him: “Friend, Judas...”

### HOW OFTEN SHALL I GO TO CONFESSION?

1. By Divine Law : When I am conscious of mortal sin and at the first reasonable opportunity.
2. By Church Law : once a year at Easter time, when the Paschal Mystery draws me to the Crucified and Risen Lord.
3. For Religious : “often”, interpreted “once a fortnight” because of the close living with the Lord which is the meaning of religious life.
4. The Law of Love: when the delicacy of love draws me to “hunger and thirst for justice” Mt. 5.6



## PRAYER TO MY FORGIVING, CRUCIFIED JESUS

*"The splendid irrationality of the Christian faith,  
wherein an Infinite God awaits in anguish  
the return of the prodigal sinner!"*

*I stand at your side, Crucified Lord Jesus, your right  
hand stretched over my head in forgiveness. Do you never  
tire of forgiving me? No one forgives as You do! Again and  
again, in infinite love!*

*Do you still believe me after so many broken promises?  
Can you still patiently follow me after so many dodges?  
Let me learn the real meaning of Love and the extent You  
are willing to go to help me back.  
Build up in me the values that have been destroyed by sin.  
Above all, let me never forget your loving patience!*



# 11

## JESUS & JUDAS THE UNFORGIVEABLE SIN Rejecting the Redeemer

“Friend”, says Jesus, “for what are you here?” Mt 26,50

“Judas, will you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”  
Lk 22,48

Jesus goes out to Judas at the very moment of betrayal.  
Till the very end the Redeemer appeals.  
But the sinner has closed tight.  
He rejects the Redeemer's love.



The Unforgivable Sin

JUDAS

*How could he lift those eyes,  
their stony gaze  
he sought to hide,  
when in their depths  
the love of other days  
had waned and died.*

*As cold as ashes  
that a raving flame  
hath burned away,  
their love the Master's look  
would n'er reclaim  
so cold were they!*

*He rose and like a phantom  
of the dead  
seeking its tomb,  
across the threshold  
shadow-like he fled  
into the gloom.*

*Into that gloom  
that neither mind nor eye  
hath fathomed quite ....  
Above him shone the breathless  
star-strewn sky  
and it was night!*

Frank West s.j.



There are 'tone' words in this poem, words that spell  
death of person:        **stony gaze**  
                                 **cold eyes**  
                                 **gloom**  
                                 **night**

He shuts out the Redeemer  
This is the unforgiveable sin!

It is St. John, the apostle of love, who gives us a depth  
account of Judas' betrayal.

### **Break at the Eucharist**

Already in chapter six, at the promise of the Eucharist, when  
Jesus is offering his best gift, himself as food of life, as pledge  
of eternal life, there is rejection, rejection by disciples! Jesus  
is forced to appeal to his inner circle of Apostles: "Will you  
also go away?" Peter comes up strongly: "To whom shall  
we go, you have the words of eternal life, and we have known  
that you are the Holy One of God". Jn 6,65 And Jesus adds:  
"Did I not choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil."  
He spoke of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, since this was the  
man, one of the twelve, who was going to betray him.

It is Fulton Sheen who says: Judas first broke with Jesus  
at the Eucharist!

And the evangelist cannot get over the awful fact: **One  
of the twelve** will betray him!

### **The anointing at Bethany Jn 12**

After the raising of Lazarus, at the supper prepared for  
Jesus, Mary annoints his feet with a pound of precious  
ointment, pure nard. Judas said: Why was this ointment not  
sold and the money given to the poor. St. John says: He was



## The Unforgivable Sin

a thief and cared nothing for the poor. He used to help himself from the contributions to the common fund.

The only evaluation he can make is in terms of money. Person means nothing!

The man who knew the price of everything, and the value of nothing. So says Fulton Sheen again.

## The planning and plotting

The Pharisees were afraid of the people, they did not want to seize Jesus on the feast day. Mt 26,5.

And there came Judas, pat to their purpose: "What will you give me if I deliver him up to you? And they promised him MONEY! Again evaluating a person against money! And he sought out an opportunity to betray him! Planning and plotting! All sanctities in the dust! THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER — the lordly price at which they evaluated the Son of God made man. (Zech 11,13) The price of a slave's life. (Ex 21,32)

## At the Last Supper table

Jesus was troubled in spirit. Jn 13,21  
"One of you will betray me".

"The man who puts his hand with me into the dish".  
Sharing food, tasting his salt meant establishing a bond for life. And here is one who shares my table and betrays me!!  
The one who shares my table will lift up his heel against me!

## "Is it I, Lord"

- coming from each of them in turn, this was anxious concern — "say it is not I, Lord!"

- coming from Judas it is something altogether different. Hypocrisy? Bravado? Concealment? Brazenness?  
Jesus answers Judas: They are your own words. Mt. 26,25



### The hurt of Jesus

How deep does this betrayal hurt him?  
One of the **twelve**, gifted to him by the Father.  
One who knows all his secrets.  
One whom He has warned

Mk. 14.18 "The Son of man goes as it is written, of him but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It were better for that man if he had not been born".

Jn 17,12 "Of those thou hast given me I have not lost one, save the son of perdition that chose to be lost, that the Scripture might be fulfilled".

### The act of betrayal

Judas knew the place, the place of prayer, the garden of Olives, and he led the rabble there. He gave them a sign: he whom I kiss that is he, hold him fast and lead him away carefully.

He came up, he could not look into the eyes of Jesus, he blistered his cheek with the traitor's kiss. He was deaf when Jesus said: Friend, Judas...

### Moment of Majesty

Jesus went forward to the crowd and asked: Whom do you seek? Jesus of Nazareth, they shouted. And he replied in majesty **"I AM"** the name of God which no man can pronounce. They fell to the ground, Judas among them!

Jn 18,6

### THE JUDAS-PETER COMPLEX

There is a misleading word in the translation of Mt 27,3. "When he found that Jesus was condemned, Judas his betrayer was 'filled with remorse'... or 'he repented', and then follow all the dramatic gestures of return to the chief priests, casting the money down, and hanging himself. This



## The Unforgivable Sin

is not contrition. It should rather read: he was filled with disgust at himself, ... but there is no turning to the Lord who was waiting for him: Friend, Judas. He learned to hate himself, he destroyed the empty shell that was left.

**Not Peter!** "Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter, and he went out and wept bitterly". Lk 23,61 He wept out his triple denial with triple confession. He learned to love his forgiven self. That is true contrition. And Jesus re-instates his first vicar on earth in a pilgrim church!

### Let another take his place

In the plan of providence Judas was to be "one of those who was with us the whole time that the Lord Jesus was traveling around with us, someone who was with us right from the time when John was baptizing until the day when he was taken up from us — and he can act with us as **witness to his resurrection**"

Acts 1,21.

"The Holy Spirit, speaking through David foretells the fate of Judas who offered himself as a guide to the men who arrested Jesus. After having been one of our number and actually sharing this ministry of ours.

Let his camp be reduced to ruin Ps 69,25

Let someone else take his office Ps 109,8."

The 120 gathered in the upper room after the Ascension, prayed

*"Show us which of these two you have chosen to take the place, ministry and apostolate which Judas abandoned to go to his proper place". And so Mathias was listed as one of the twelve apostles.*



## 12

### SO, YOU ARE A KING!

Jn 18,37

*Pilate's incredulous exclamation!*  
*Before him stands a most unlikely king,*  
*scourged, crowned with thorns,*  
*an old purple cloak thrown over his shoulders,*  
*mock sceptre in his bound hands,*  
**BUT A STRAIGHT LOOK IN HIS EYE!**

*Pilate can be excused for his unbelief.*  
*The answer, however, comes loud and clear:*  
**YES, I AM A KING**  
**FOR THIS I WAS BORN, FOR THIS I CAME INTO THE**  
**WORLD**

**TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH.**  
**HE WHO IS OF THE TRUTH HEARS MY VOICE**  
Jn 18,37



So, You are a King!

This Jesus, who has so often been silencing His followers when they wanted to make him 'king' (Jn 6,15), who has warned them of his death and suffering when they competed for first places (Mt 20,20) reveals himself to the sinner Samaritan woman (Jn 4,26), and now openly to Pilate: YES, I AM A KING!

In the middle ages, Jesus crucified was not pictured stripped when nailed to the Cross. He was pictured as PRIEST KING: dressed in priestly vestments, the alb coming down to the nailed feet, a superb Gothic chasuble, and a crown of gold on His head.

Comes the foolish virgin, fervently: My Lord, my God!

So Jesus says: Come here my dear, remove this crown of gold. As she does so, there is blood on her fingers; the crown of thorns is below the crown of gold, His back is scourged!

"My kingship, he says, is not in velvet and gold.

My kingship is my love for you".

So the virgin learns wisdom.

SHALL WE LEARN WISDOM?

A kingship of bearing witness to the Truth.

A king who has the strength to stand alone, death threatening!

"No man takes my life from me. I lay it down,  
I take it up again"

Jn 10,17

ST. IGNATIUS brings us face to face with this king in three decision meditations:

THE KINGDOM

THE TWO STANDARDS

THE THIRD DEGREE OF HUMILITY



## THE KINGDOM

This is a decision meditation, for a binding choice of person, face to face with Christ. The imperative that applies to me.

Ignatius presents an **attractive personality**, Jesus Christ, with a **difficult programme**, but with a sense of reality.

Ignatius calls for **affection** to the Person, so the programme goes through, difficult as it is!

## CHRIST THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD

“Let us give thanks to the Father  
who has qualified us to share  
in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness  
and transferred us to the kingdom of his Beloved Son,  
in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin.

He is the image of the invisible God,  
the first-born of all creation;  
for in him all things were created  
in heaven and on earth,  
visible and invisible.

All things were created through him and for him.  
He is before all things  
And in him all things hold together.

He is the head of the body, the Church.  
He is the beginning, the first born from the dead,  
that in everything He might be pre-eminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,  
And through Him to reconcile to Himself all things,



whether on earth or in heaven,  
making peace by the blood of His Cross" Col 1, 1-20

IN HIM ALL THINGS WERE CREATED  
HE HOLDS THE PRIMACY, THE FULLNESS  
OF GODHEAD,  
THE PLEROMA (fulness). HE IS REDEEMER!

## THE MEDITATION

### 1st Prelude:

The incarnate Son of God, is building His kingdom. He goes through the synagogues, villages and towns preaching the Word.

- A sense of reality of the kingdom of God among men today. No empty pomp and splendour.
- The crucified one descends into creaturehood, descends to the darkness and abyss of sin to lift fallen man to God.

### 2nd Prelude:

The grace I need: To know him deeply, intimately, so that I may follow him closely.

This knowledge, "epignosis" is not merely conceptual, notional, theoretical; but comes from personal experience. The result is "sophia", wisdom personified. St. Paul says; "May you be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all spiritual wisdom and insight and understanding".

Col 1,9

## THE CALL

"to conquer the whole world and all enemies"  
obviously with the weapons of truth and love.  
Gandhi calls Jesus the first Satyagrahi, standing firmly for truth, and drawing men by His suffering love  
(Ahimsa).

Echo of St. John: "When I shall be lifted up I shall  
draw all men to myself" Jn 12,32



## CONDITIONS OF THE CALL

The key word here is "WITH ME" - companionship!

Five times in the 'parable' of the earthly king,

Four times in the application to Christ the King

"Whoever desires to come **with me** must be contented with the food that I eat, with the drink and the clothing I have etc

In like manner, he must labour as I do during the day, and watch during the night; in order that afterward he may have part **with me** in the victory as he had in the hard work".

"Whoever therefore desires to come **with Me** must labour with Me, in order that following Me in pain, he may likewise follow Me in glory".

## THE ANSWER:

A sense of duty and reason will require a prompt answer.

But those who wish to show **greater affection** and to signalise themselves in every kind of service...

not only offer their whole persons....

but acting against their sensuality and their carnal and worldly love, will make offers of greater worth:

## THE OBLATION

"Eternal Lord of all things, I make my oblation with Thy favour and help, in the presence of Thine infinite goodness, and in the sight of thy glorious Mother and of all the saints of the heavenly court, protesting that I wish and desire, and that it is my deliberate determination, to imitate thee in bearing all insults and reproaches and all poverty, as well actual as poverty of spirit, if only Thy Divine Majesty be pleased to choose and receive me into this life and state".



His Most Holy Mother; His closest follower, who has that AFFECTION for Him of which St. Ignatius speaks, She is our model, She will be our intercessor.

\* \* \* \*

## THE TWO STANDARDS

This second decision meditation presents the **FIELDS OF CHOICE**

(We never make our decisions from a neutral position. We live in a world burdened with sin, within and around us, this is the existential position in which and from which we make our decisions, our choices.)

Here is a study **in contrasts**: two camps, two strategies, two very different leaders and programmes of action. St. Ignatius puts the biblical choice in this meditation: for or against Christ.



## CHRIST OUR LORD

Jerusalem, city of peace  
Jesus on a lowly plain,  
fair and beautiful.

sends apostles; attract men  
the art of **persuasion**.

bring them to desire  
poverty of spirit, with the  
attendant reproaches and  
insults that lead to humility  
of truth.

## THE ADVERSARY (SATAN)

Babylon, city of confusion  
On a lofty throne of fire &  
smoke in aspect fearful & horrible.

lay snares and chains  
the art of **seduction**

to covet riches, possessions  
to vain honours of the world  
and to unbounded pride!

A high court judge was attending a play where the devil in traditional black, with trident and tail and rasping voice, was making his bid. On the other side was the angel in white, soft and gentle.

Said the judge: This is a mistake. The devil should be presented as a fashionable, persuasive person of our day. Remember he is a seducer! We would run from him if he appeared in his true colours.

Should we present the angel of truth, persistent, with torn feathers, because truth is mauled today?

## THE SNARES — approach of the enemy

**Riches**, possessions, material and other: talent, ability areas of influence, desired to give the ability to do, to be acknowledged as 'somebody'. Hence accumulation.



**Vain honours of the world:** influence, self-build, self-imposition, treading on others, manipulating others. A growing hunger for one's importance and a resistance of all that under-cuts SELF, the over-weaning SELF.

**Pride:** I hold to myself at any price, ultimately even against God.

There is an unmistakable increase of intensity in the three levels of temptation, of snares: and an unmistakable connection.

And while they are called snares, we do not see them as snares. Why, this is the drive all round us, and builds the drive within us — so persuasive to our growing hunger, so much the 'done' thing.

To have, in order to do, **IN ORDER TO BE, BE ABSOLUTELY!**

**PERSUASION** — the approach of Christ

**Poverty of spirit**, which means the restraining of our proud spirit and all that feeds it.

The non-attachment that makes for contentedness and readiness to share. The consequent **ridicule** of the worldly, the contempt reserved for those who are not 'in' with the majority, not 'in' with the fashion of the day, the rat race - within religious life and outside it.

**Humility** — the ground level **REALITY** of a purposeful life, open to God and to the neighbour, giving God and man their rights and building up others.



## THE COLLOQUIES

Since we are in need of a great grace,  
a discerning knowledge of the deceits of the  
enemy even when they are attractive,  
and of the values of Christ even if they seem  
difficult at first sight,

Ignatius indicates **THREE COLLOQUIES**:

1. To our Lady: The one who understood Jesus best, who  
had the **AFFECTION** of which Ignatius  
speaks the one who stood at the Cross in  
witness & partnership "that He may choose  
and receive me under His standard".  
"Place me with your Son".
2. To Christ: Obtain this grace for me from the Father  
this affection for you the insight you had  
in the plan of wisdom, strength and love.
3. To the Father: Place me with your Son make me truly  
one of the family with your Son's sense  
of loyalty - noblesse oblige!

\* \* \* \*

## THE THREE DEGREES OF HUMILITY

This third decisive meditation is actually **A LEAP OF LOVE!**

Ignatius uses the word love sparingly.

The Scripture translation of love is 'give':

"Greater love than this has no man than to give his life..."

Jn 15,13

"He loved me, He gave Himself up for me"

Gal 2,20

"Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her..."

Eph. 5,25



So, You are a King!

Ignatius wants love to be practical, giving all one has and is. (Contemplation for Obtaining Love)

## HUMILITY

is a base, a foundation virtue, starting at **reality**, the ground (humus) on which I stand.

I stand full stature. I measure myself in relationship to God, the measure of all, and spell out the three-fold relationship:

1st Degree: The fundamental, the essential tie with God.  
“I will not even deliberate on a break, through Mortal Sin”.

2nd Degree: The more delicate tie, the keenly felt relationship: No created person or thing will affect this relationship. Venial sin would affect this fine balance.

3rd Decree: **THE GREAT LEAP** — The love that the Crucified spells is wisdom, is strength, is the only LOVE.  
**CAUGHT UP IN THIS LOVE, I DESIRE  
TO LOCK MYSELF IN WITH THIS  
FOOLISHNESS, THIS WEAKNESS,  
THIS UTTER GIVING!**

Love is not a feeling. LOVE IS A DECISION!

Says Ignatius: I would not deliberate about a mortal, or a venial sin. These are three **degrees**, not three kinds of humility.

The first is the foundation, the second the take off, the third is the landing!



## AN AUDACIOUS LOVE OF THE CRUCIFIED LORD

A love that does not seek a this-worldly foundation.

The true lover of the Crucified has leapt out of self, and remains under the Cross, completely convinced of the unconditional love of the Crucified. HE IS MORE THAN EVER REAL!

THIS IS THE HIGH POINT OF THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES.

## ARE WE REAL?

A group of young Sisters attending college, mixing with young people of their own age, is called on in retreat to check the comparative value of their consecrated lives against that of the young people 'in the world'. Are we real?

money to spend, consumerism  
restless hunger for more, rat  
race for power and self

detachment, contentedness  
honesty of open giving

vanity of fashion  
rivalry for position  
tossed by fickle 'love'

the surety of a Spouse  
rock firmness  
personal fulfilment &  
partnership

constant claim of independence  
restlessness of self choice  
enslavement to public opinion

the prudence of guidance  
truth and reality  
firm and sure

life is a whirl  
dizzy with being pushed around  
empty idols of the passing  
moment

purposeful life, building  
others, steadiness of heart  
and life "I know whom I  
have believed"

2 Tim 1,12



# 13

## CONSECRATED VIRGINITY

### Espousals in Love

*It is the love in one's life  
that spells fulfilment or frustration.*

*St. Augustine*

*It can be wise to accept a call from  
a Divine Person who promises  
love and companionship  
that no human being can give.*

*Ladislav Orsy s.j.*



*Deep experiential union with God  
can be so captivating, that one  
does not want to conclude any close  
union with a human person.*

*Ladislav Orsy S.J.*

“That chastity which is practiced on behalf of the heavenly Kingdom (Mt 19,12) and which religious profess, deserves to be esteemed as a **surprising** gift of grace. For it liberates the human heart in a **unique** way (I Cor 7, 32-35) and causes it to burn with **greater love** for God and all mankind. Religious thereby give witness to all Christ’s faithful of that wondrous **marriage** between the Church and Christ her only Spouse, a union which has been established by God, and will be fully manifested in the world to come.”

Vatican II. P.C. 12

“Religious life, as a consecration of the whole person, manifests in the Church the marvellous **marriage** established by God as a sign of the world to come.

Religious thus consummate a full gift of themselves as an offering to God, so that their whole existence becomes a continuous worship of God in love”. 1983 Code of Canon Law 607

## PRE-EMINENCE OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY

1 Cor 7,34 : “Being holy in body and spirit”

35 : “undivided devotion to the Lord”

O.T.: sanctified by God through the presence of His Glory and power: Sinai, The Temple, Holy of Holies.  
The power and glory of God descends, overshadows, consecrates.



## Consecrated Virginity

N.T.: The temple has lost its holiness  
Now the holiness of God resides in the Christian  
particularly in the virgin: consecrated temple;  
a new cult, a new liturgy emerges, that of the eternal  
and immortal Kingdom of God.

## MARRIAGE AND VIRGINITY

In its document on Priestly Formation, the II Vatican Council directs: "Seminarians should be duly aware of the duties and dignity of Christian marriage which bodies forth the love between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5,32). Let them perceive as well the superiority of virginity consecrated to Christ, so that by a choice which is maturely thought out and magnanimous they may attach themselves to God by a total Gift of body and soul" n. 10

In Ephesians **marriage** is a symbol or sign of Christ's union with His Church, an earthly reality to demonstrate and illustrate a heavenly mystery — **SACRAMENT**

**VIRGINITY** is a final **REALITY IN ITSELF**, not a symbol for something else; an analogy with the life of the blessed in heaven. Beyond figure and type, the consecrated virgin begins here below the heavenly mystic nuptials, a bold anticipation of heaven that will grow into its promised fulness. Lk 20,27; Mt 22,30; Mt 19,22

### 1. PARTNERSHIP

"It is **not** good for man to be **alone**. I will make him a helper fit for him" Gen 2,18. The two persons in **marriage** are to be of one mind, heart and body — one flesh, one spirit. In this is found the holiness of marriage, and Christ made it His sacrament, the symbol of His union with the Church.



In **VIRGINITY** God breaks through, to offer **HIMSELF** as the one and exclusive companion of man, in a new encounter, a new covenant with the jealous God of Israel. This implies realising the overwhelming value of friendship with God, a refreshing, exhilarating friendship, sharing divine things in a divine way; friendship on a transcendent plane, yet immanent "God with us".

The offer attracts the whole human person, satisfies the deepest human aspirations, and is an overwhelming experience of God's presence. "You have seduced me, Lord God, and I have let myself be seduced; You were the stronger".

Jer 20,7.

No person could desire virginity unless she found another **PERSON** who is more lovable than any man or woman.

Prayer is the heart of this communication and partnership.

## 2. **TOTAL LOVE**

**Married** love and union extend to **Mind, Heart** and **Body**, where body is sign and sacrament of mind and heart and so does not enslave person.

In **CONSECRATED VIRGINITY** grace is infused into the **WHOLE, PERSON**, soul and body as one, so that a new balance is given to the whole person, including the body. **SEX IS THE POWER OF THE WHOLE PERSON**. So one who has no companion according to the law of nature can be happy, balanced and relaxed. The spiritual holds all in equilibrium.



## Consecrated Virginity

This is an "ECSTATIC" state: human:

runner on second wind

mother tending sick child

lover with loved one

divine: fire walking, dancing dervish

love sweeps a person off her feet!

"It is good for us to be here" Lk 9,33

This is union on a spiritual level, not a material communication. In no way does it fulfil the natural desire to be with a human companion. Yet the spiritual abundance reverberates on the body, so that there is a decreasing sense of frustration and an increasing sense of fulfilment for the whole person. Natural instincts do not die, but learn to participate in the new impulses of the spirit. Fasting on Good Friday leaves one hungry, but mind and spirit make it purposeful and relaxed even if hungry.

### 3. UNITY

In marriage because one is finite and gives all to one person one must exclude others.

**THE VIRGIN** witnesses to Christ's unconditional love that accepts every person, because she has dared to measure up to the infinite. Hers is an unconditional, many-levelled, uncondescending friendship and communication with every member of Christ, on any present day, in any jungle or city block or slum.

### 4. FRUITFUL

**Married** love is fruitful. The division of the sexes consecrates the man and woman to the child, sealing in their flesh the first elements of its corporeal life, and thus in their very bodies prefiguring the profound **altruism** that is expressed



in fatherhood and motherhood. As this image grows in strength, it can and does happen that the flesh is calmed, submits more readily to the ordering of the spirit, and feels a pure joy in being in some manner associated with the very active fecundity of the spirit.

**THE CONSECRATED VIRGIN**, in person motherhood, gives life AND LOVE THAT Christ may be born in the souls of men. The young religious who tenderly carries the abandoned child, who builds up the orphan, is person mother, where the physical mother has abdicated her role.

\* \* \* \*

### DYNAMIC VIRTUE

The mustard seed, tender, sensitive, needs care, but grows into a large plant, weathers storms, shelters many!

Each must assess her gift and live accordingly. No two persons are the same. To seek too much human fulfilment while virginity is taking root may cut short development of spiritual friendship with God. Friends of God were always trained and tested in some sort of desert! It can only be by-passed in the imagination of some, never in reality. Not even Christ by-passed it. The cloistered virgin is such a witness to the presence of the Kingdom. P.C. 7

When it develops, it is a light to shine, a leaven for the masses, proclaiming from the roof tops the Kingdom of God!

\* \* \* \*



## VIRGINITY AND COMMUNITY

Communing is natural because of the common gift. To introduce one another to the mystery of God requires a delicate sensitivity of grace and our consecration. This creates the happy and relaxed community, with all the freedom that virginity can add to it — open to all, no spirit of exclusivity, happy, healthy friendships where it is the Lord who unites those who are rooted individually in His love. We are not spouses of one another!

Where the balance between natural instincts and supernatural gifts is precarious, one may approach friendship with a confused mind and unruly emotions. Each community and each individual needs wisdom to know the limits of her strength, needs determination to protect herself where necessary, needs strength to discard unnecessary restrictions!

The greater the impact of grace on the community, the closer its union with the Lord, the less enclosure it needs. Where union with God does not exist, no enclosure will do any good.

The happier the community, the less restriction will be needed. Internal happiness will anchor each member to the community and attract her to it. But a barrage of rules will not anchor the community when natural forces pull the members apart.

“Above all, everyone should remember, Superiors especially, that chastity has stronger safeguards in a community when true fraternal love thrives among its members”.

Vatican II P.C. 12

\* \* \* \*



## NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE

“Clerical celibacy is a serious privation!  
he has denounced a whole dimension of life!  
That sets off many resonances, aches all through life! The  
christian message is that privation, suffering, death are  
meaningful, are witness that man's lasting fulfilment does  
not belong here.”

Charles Davis: Catholic Herald, London 11th Nov, 66

This is no Christian Doctrine, to make out that celibacy is a  
negative thing, a deprivation, a mortification a drying out of  
the person, which is then offered on the altar of 'sacrifice'.  
The theory of "the three dry sticks" offered on the altar, the  
drier they are the better they burn!!! and the smoke goes up  
to God!?!?!?

**NO!** Consecrated Virginity is love  
Consecrated Virginity is companionship  
Consecrated Virginity is experiential union with  
Christ, so captivating that one does not  
want to conclude a close relationship with  
a human person.

This is the invitation of Christ  
His gift to the virgin who responds.



Consecrated Virginity

CONCLUSION

Virginity holds the primacy in our consecration:  
our espousals with Christ                      CHRISTOLOGICAL

It is the witness of that wondrous marriage  
between the Church and the  
Christ her only spouse                      ECCLESIAL

It is a grace that redeems and vivifies the  
body and gives it a new equilibrium                      SOTERIOLOGICAL

It is a bold anticipation of the  
state of the Resurrection                      ESCHATOLOGICAL

So with Mary we sing the MAGNIFICAT a feel of strength  
from the Spirit, a sense of Fulfilment, of elation and deep  
gratitude for her fruitful virginity — Mother of the Church.



# 14

## PRAYER

### Waiting for, listening-in to the Lord

“Something is wrong with my prayer. I say, I say and then I have nothing more to say!”

“Dear; who taught you to pray? What about the prayer of listening? Go get your Bible”

And in half an hour; by the river, a new world of communication opened up

**THE PSALMIST** teaches that prayer is waiting on,  
listening for the Lord:

To Thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul,  
Let none that wait for Thee be put to shame Ps 25/1



## Prayer

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him Ps 37

Be still and know that I am God Ps 46/10

For God alone my soul waits in silence  
from him comes my salvation Ps 62

From morning watch even to night;  
let Israel hope in the Lord Ps 130/6

**THE PROPHETS** urge the people of God to wait for the  
Redeemer

I will look to the Lord

I will wait for the God of my salvation Micah 7,7

Wait for me, says the Lord: Eph 3,8

It is good to wait in silence for the salvation of God

Lam 3,24

**THE ANSWER** to this prayer is the Lord himself the  
Redeemer in Person.

And the Father bids us "Listen to Him," Mk 9,7

Lk 9,37.

## LISTENING - ATTENTIVELY

This waiting, this watching, this listening-in for the Lord is not mere passivity. It is keenly active. All that is best, and richest in the human mind and heart is brought to a keen sense of expectancy.

Not only have other voices to be silenced, but all the 'senses' of mind and heart are keyed up, concentrated in attention to the Person. Silenced are all pre-conceived notions, all ready-made solutions, because the Lord is so rich as a person, so delicately sensitive in his coming, so other-worldly in his communication:



*"O the depths of the riches and wisdom  
and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable are his judgments,  
how inscrutable his ways!  
For from him and through him and in him are all things.  
To him be glory for ever." Rom 11,33*

### MOVEMENT OF BEING

Every being is moving towards its fulfilment, athirst for its perfecting, on the quest for its final goal. In human beings this is a search for personal union and fulfilment with God.

All this movement of our being is caused by the attraction that God the supreme being exercises by his goodness, his infinite perfection. This, however, is not a purely external action — in the wise plan of God it is an innate tendency, a dynamic force, planted in every being, with all the vitality that God has put into it. GOD IS NOT AN OUTSIDER!

God has so planned that all participated being shall of its very nature, and in accord with it, call to the Supreme Being with that inner voice which is part of its nature; that its fulfilment is a perfecting of its own being, that its attainment in union shall be its own final goal.

In the supernatural economy, it is the Three Divine Persons within us, helping us to direct ourselves to them. It is the life within (started by grace) leading to that perfection, that stability and that fulness of life which is glory. Heaven is the realization of our own perfection, the possession, the fulfilment and the full-finding of our own being in God the Supreme Being, in union with him. That is life, its true meaning — all else is distraction (tearing apart) contradiction (negation of being) and death.



## Prayer

With the clear light of reason and the flood-light of revelation and deliberate will (a glorious sharing of God's prerogative of self-determination), man directs himself to God, or away from him in sin.

So prayer is defined: The upward trend of the human being meeting God. Or, the inward movement of the mind and heart seeking God within and around us.

Just as grace is the seed of glory, the very beginning of the life of glory, so prayer can be said to be the beginning of the eternal communing face to face with God.

In the natural as well as the supernatural order, it is persons that matter, not things; it is the personal relations that are delicate, satisfying, ennobling and enriching.

### THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

It should be clear now how necessary prayer is for every person. The noblest part of our nature calls for this communing with God, seeking our fulfilment in this union.

The sanctified must pray. Prayer is their sustenance, the very air they must breathe. And for two reasons: 1. We do not live in a vacuum; there are forces of sin within us and all around us that would pull us downstream, away from God. 2. Our God-given natures must find their fulness, their ultimate purpose in this full union with God.

1. Living is a tension between good and evil. With our fallen natures we can easily go down! Scripture points this out in the book of Daniel, chapter 13. When the two elders were "inflamed with lust towards Susanna, they perverted their own minds and turned away their eyes that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember



just judgments. So they were both wounded by the love of her..." and the sin followed.

Spiritual guides will tell us that loss of vocation, a falling away from the faith, starts with a neglect of prayer. Tepidity in religious souls is traceable to the same cause.

A modern example is given us in the case of Charles Davis. When he had left the priesthood and the Church, and was writing a good deal in the papers, an old former nun, Monica Baldwin, wrote a small, telling letter: "I read all that he is writing. There is not a word on prayer. I know from my own sad experience what that can mean." This is the woman who many years before had left religious life and gleefully written a book: *I LEAP OVER THE WALL!*

2. The sanctified must pray if their life is to be full and satisfying and fruitful; if they are to avail themselves of the riches of the divine life that is gifted to them, if they are in God's providence to lead others, to be intercessors of the faithful with God. Even to satisfy their own "hunger and thirst" for God, once they have tasted Him.

### THE EFFECTS OF PRAYER

It is in the intercommuning of persons that we shall find the effects of prayer — an enrichment of personality, a strength in partnership.

In prayer, the intellect of God illumines mine, and I get a glimpse of the wisdom of his designs. The plan of creation is unfolded in all its richness, and I can sing with the poet-psalmist: "The heavens are telling the glory of God" Ps. 18. With the philosopher Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans I can exclaim: "Man has caught sight of his invisible



## Prayer

nature, his eternal power, his divinity, as read in his visible creation: Rom 1.19

Now if the plan of creation can lead us to deep philosophical thinking and raptures of poetry, what when the grandeur of revelation unfolds the riches of the inner life of God, the unfathomable love in the plan of the Incarnation and Redemption! My mind is held by the wisdom and depths of his love, my heart set aflame with reciprocating love:

"How deep is the mine of God's wisdom... Rom 11,33  
"Quis non amantem redamet, quis non redemptus diligat  
Et corde in ipso seligat, aeterna tabernacula"  
Who will not love the one who loves so deep!  
Will not the redeemed love in return  
and bind himself to this eternal heart of love!

My will also becomes partaker of the strength of God's will to whom to will is to act, whose salvific will moves in love towards all, in strong and gentle providence.

The result of this communing is a communicating of personality traits: an enriching, a correcting, a strengthening. So comes a calm born of assurance, a strength born of the power of God, a patience that imitates his longanimity and mercy, a humility that lets his power shine through.

Becoming another Christ in my apostolate, I become a chalice to change daily the worldly into the heavenly, the tears, sweat and blood of humanity into the life-giving blood of Christ.

If of God it is said: "God wills the sanctification of all, "then of me in my apostolate, now Christ like, there is the same efficacious and hard working desire for the saving of souls, realizing the grandeur of the plan, ready to pay the



price of love that is included in the plan, and sure with the strength of God that the plan will succeed.

## EFFICACIOUSNESS OF PRAYER

By this we usually mean: Is prayer answered?

If we define prayer as "listening-in to the Lord, the deliberate, the depth consciousness of his person, sharing his wisdom, his "feel," his patient love that draws into partnership, so you can say with Paul: "I know whom I have believed, and I am sure..." 2 Tim 1,12, **THEN PRAYER IS ALWAYS ANSWERED!**

If by prayer we mean "asking something of God," the prayer of petition, let St. Augustine clarify things for us. We must ask worthy things of God! The Lord himself has said "Seek first his kingdom, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well." Mt. 6,33

Theologically, this is the **ONE AND ONLY THING THAT IS WORTHY! THY WILL BE DONE!** This is the one and only thing that will, that can be granted! So all prayer must pray that, else it is in vain!

Chapter 7 of Mathew speaks of the confidence in asking, of the perseverance in asking... but the one inescapable point is surely: **YOU MUST ASK THAT HIS WILL BE DONE.** Nothing else is possible. Really it is the only prayer of petition.

**THY WILL -**

The prayer of wisdom: his will is best!  
the prayer of humility, of reality! I  
keep my place! the prayer of trust in  
a Father!



## Prayer

**WILL BE DONE -** the prayer of patience: his Will will be done! The wheels of God grind slow; we of a day are all worked up. How often men slow God down!

**BE DONE ! -** Prayer of obedience: We feed on his ideas, we will with him and execute his designs. Up and do!!!

Results come accordingly!

we can choose resignation and groan A-M-E-N

we can choose active co-operation and say:

**THANKS BE TO GOD!**

we can choose joyful co-operation: and sing ALLELUIA!!

\* \* \* \*

## **LISTENING - ATTENTIVELY TO GOD'S ANSWER**

Again, not mere passivity, but close attention and receptivity! Can the answer be: No! (Will he give his son a scorpion: Mt 7,9)

Can the answer be: NOT QUITE THAT! (Command these stones be bread" Mt. 4,3

Can the answer be: THINK DEEPER, THINK CLOSER! ("Abba, Father..Mk 14,36)

Can it happen that our prayer of petition can be so self-centred, so anguish laden, so insistent on a particular answer that it is a one-sided, unlistening insistence?

The prayer of petition can be a testing point of our relationship with God:



1. Do we place him first, honour his position as God, acknowledge his primacy and love?

*"Prayer is not asking things of God  
but receiving what He wants to give you.  
It is not being heard by God  
but hearing God praying in you.  
It is not asking God's forgiveness  
but opening yourself to His forgiveness.  
It is not offering yourself to God  
but welcoming God offering Himself to you!"*

Louis Evelyn

2. Are we servant, outsider, child, spouse? Are we on the outside, or are we one of the family?

Hebr. 5 tells us that Our Lord "Was heard for his godly reverence... that he learned obedience by his suffering". Listening to the Father, Jesus takes his place before his ABBA, as loyal son, listens as the Father recalls the wisdom, the strength and the love of the plan of redemption, and through the sweat of blood comes not only to a groaned amen, but "the cup MY FATHER gave me, shall I not drink it".

He is the model for our listening prayer of petition.  
Listening in deep silence,  
Accepting the Father's will in love.

*"If chosen souls could never be alone,  
in deep mid-silence, open-doored to God,  
no greatness ever had been dreamed or done"*

Lumsden Barkway



Prayer

3. *Not ready answers; but  
We ask for strength and God gives us difficulties  
which make us strong:*

*We pray for courage and God gives us danger  
which makes us: aware*

*We ask for favours and God gives us challenges  
which makes us grow:*

Taylor Caldwell

**LET US PRAY**

*Lord God, how often have I tried to encounter you  
- but I have not listened.*

*I am too prone to speak myself, even in conversation  
with you - and then you fall silent.*

*I have stood erect, in sovereign freedom,  
and spoken my comprehension of your world  
and my conquest of it. But it was only my monologue!  
Teach me to kneel and perceive the deepest meaning of you,  
my living God, and acknowledge your divine mystery.  
Teach me to listen in dialogue with you, my partner,  
and understand and accept you in deep silence.*



# 15

## HOPE POVERTY

### Stepping Stone To Love

*Blessed are the poor!*

*Nonsense, utter nonsense!*

*Blessed are those who have no food,  
no clothing, no shelter?*

*Blessed are those who have no education,  
most of all those who have no love???*

### BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

This is the beatitude. Blessed are the ANAWIM YAH-WEH, those who stand face to face with God, in whom alone they trust as their only and steadfast source. Old Testament figures like Abel, Noah, Abraham, Enoch, Moses. New



## Hope Poverty

Testament figures like Simeon, Anna, and most of all OUR LADY, the leader of the Anawim Yahweh! They gladly let go to God!

### THE DYNAMIC VIRTUE

In the triple dynamic of FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, faith lights the vision and stirs the desire for union. But the vision is beyond our powers: "Without Me you can do nothing" In 15,5; worse, we are not only powerless but sinful and inconstant!

So God comes to our help in **HOPE**, with His power, His merciful forgiveness and His constant faithfulness; comes to lift us up to **LOVE**.

Faith is the sighting, Hope the boost, Love the landing! All we have to do is to let go of ourselves, our precious selves, our proud selves. **That is the spirit which has to be poor!**

In chapter 14 of the Book of Daniel, we have Daniel in the lions' den, in Babylon, imprisoned because he adored God alone. The Lord thinks of His faithful servant and sends His angel to Judea, to the prophet Habakuk: "Take the dinner you have prepared (for the workers) to Babylon, to Daniel in the lions' den".

"No, Lord", says Habakuk, "not to an unknown place, not to an unknown man and surely not to the lions' den"! "I have orders" says the angel, and proceeds to put his fingers to grasp Habakuk by the hair. Scripture says: "he took Habakuk by the hair and landed him in the lions' den".

Let us phantasize. There is the angel with his orders, hand firmly gripping Habakuk's hair. There is Habakuk



holding to the reality he knows so well, nailing himself down to terra firma!

"Don't play with me" says the angel. I have my orders".  
"I am not moving from this land I know well to the unknown..." says Habakuk.

What happens when the two are equally determined? Will the angel get just the hair of Habakuk?

CARRIED BY THE HAIR, FROM THE KNOWN TO THE UNKNOWN!

Better keep still, and let go! It hurts less!

Poverty of spirit - let go to God  
- let go to His power, His mercy,  
his Love.

### ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The whole world, Christian and non-Christian, knows Francis of Assisi as the model of poverty. Let us take his life in three connected points:

1. The poverello
2. The vision of the Crucified in the form of a seraph
3. The support of the Church.

#### 1. IL POVERELLO -

The happy little poor man! In Italian the diminutive form speaks affection, and is best translated: the happy little poor man. Yes, happy poverty! Not IL POVERO, the stern, serious, deprived man, who speaks of poverty as the firm wall of religion, as the mother of virtues!



## Hope Poverty

The tone of Francis is important; it is poetry; it is vision; it is Lady poverty; it is romantic! He ascends, happily leaves all below, he soars above earth, he sings a poem to the sun, he builds his airy shelters for himself and St. Clare.

### THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!

This is peculiarly the spirit of Jesus Christ. Catch the spirit of adventure in the 'kenosis' of Phil 2,6: swiftly leaves heaven, and divinity, gladly descends to earth, to poor earth, to poorer man, to bring joy, to bring the kingdom of heaven.

It is not surprising that Francis is said to have built the first crib, a joyful place where angels can sing Glory to God, and peace to man; where in happy detachment the Son of God, rich in utter poverty, enriches us!

This same Jesus says to those who would follow Him: "The foxes have their holes and the birds of the air their nests, but the Son of man has no where to lay His head" Mt 8,20. What is His tone? Envious of the secure foxes, of the nesting birds? While His head is heavy? Or is He saying: "Watch me free! I need no foxhole or bird nest. My Father is in heaven"! God is his all.

He goes to His cross, stripped, nailed to the bare wood, is buried in a borrowed grave (Oh, for a short while; he will rise). Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who can let go gladly.

## 2. THE VISION OF THE CRUCIFIED (Mt. Alverna)

The Seraph, highest of the choirs of angels,  
mirroring the qualities of God, His burning love,  
face to face!

What Francis grasps of the Crucified is given in the vision.  
Poverty and the Seraph go together.

The poor in spirit mount to God, face to face.



### 3. THE SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH

Il Poverello, with the heart of a Seraph is what the corrupt Church of his day needed so badly. Greed, nepotism, corruption! It is not surprising that they were not ready to receive Francis. But that night Pope Innocent III had a vision: the Lateran Basilica (cathedral of the Pope) was crumbling, and those happy poor men were holding it up! The Pope understood and called Francis and approved his order. Today, across the street from the Lateran Basilica in Rome there are giant statues of St. Francis and his companions, holding out their hands to support the Lateran Basilica, the Church of God. The Church needs this support, as against earth-binding greed and corruption.

### THE INDIAN SCENE

The Indian picture of a man of God is the honest Sadhu, eyes raised heavenward, in the discipline of God: **Brahmacharya**. His palms are open, not holding clinging to anything; trustworthy not covetous — the virtue of **APARIGRAHA** (non-grip). The word poverty can be misleading; it could stand for need, crushing emptiness, collapse; whereas **Aparigraha** is liberating non-greed, non-grip, eyes and heart turned to God.

Can this be a proof of the existence of God today? A man of God who in our day and age does not crave, grip or grab anything: money, power or reputation. Open-hearted, open-palmed — what you give him goes out to others!

### THE RULES OF IT

We must be practical. This cannot be an empty vision. **IT MUST PINCH!** It cannot be a comfortable life — ‘*installe dans la vie*’. The real pinch is in **PERMISSION**. That pinches



my proud, independent spirit! Open, exact permission. No area of reserve!

In a developing country, with the phenomenon of RISING EXPECTATIONS, of CONSUMERISM, we must honestly distinguish between necessity and luxury.

"There little luxury, don't you cry; you'll be a necessity by and by".

**COMMON LIFE**      Come here, big seraph, let me pluck a few feathers! food, clothes... make me fit in, not stand out! for women especially, the same cut of habit... where every woman wants to be distinct, a queen!

**CONTENTMENT**      Joy in a full, satisfied life.

**A parable:** a porcelain jug stood in a shop window: in the form of a little Franciscan friar, brown habit, tightly bound white girdle, pink rosy cheeks, proclaiming his contentment! A little further down the shelf a second..a larger friar...a third even larger!

The little one seems to be saying to the second and to the third: you are full and content; so am I! It takes more to fill you; very well. I need no more, I am well stretched, I am content!

*There is a jewel  
Which no Indian mine can buy,  
No chemic art can counterfeit;*

*It makes men rich  
in greatest poverty,  
Makes water wine,*



*Turns wooden cups to gold,  
The homely whistle  
to sweet music's strai*

*Seldom it comes,  
To few from heaven sent,  
That much in little  
All in nought*  
**CONTENT**

(Elizabethan Song)

## DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that distributive justice is proportionate to the needs of each. How difficult a lesson when we make the awfully false claim of "**EQUALITY**". There never was a bigger lie than "all men are equal". No one man is equal to another, much less one woman equal to another! Each is distinct, in qualities, in abilities, in needs.

Shall we learn to be glad that the Superior has an eye to meet this distinctness? Shall we be content that each has her need met, and is content? What subtle ways we have of asserting ourselves, our little proud spirit, even pious ways. The ascetic who must have her dry toast, done to just such a turn!

## ACTUAL POVERTY

Is sign and sacrament of poverty of spirit. Just let the sign be accurate, poverty of spirit will grow, happy poverty of a contented spirit!

\* \* \* \*



## POVERTY FOUNDATION VIRTUE

- for prayer:** For that entry of the Spirit who cries out in the depths of intimacy "ABBA".  
Prayer is a gift! Let us empty out to the Spirit, Gal 4,6; Rom 8,28
- for obedience:** for entry into REALITY, for finding God's will. Let go of my opinion, my proud spirit of independence.
- for the apostolate:** How do I touch a human heart, citadel of person? Only God can.  
The prophet Isaiah begins chapter 55 with "HO" a call to one who is far away, to one who is not paying attention! He continues: "hearken", "listen". Is the lesson so difficult? Is it so difficult to let go our false ideas of our capabilities, of our powers of persuasion to let God take over?  
When the doors of the heart are tightly shut from within... says the Prophet: "a nation you know not shall run to you because of the Lord your God, and the Holy one of Israel, because He has glorified you".
- for love:** Paul tells us in 2 Cor 12, how God brought him out of himself, proud pharisee that he was, teacher of the Law, emptied him of himself by that "thorn in the flesh", to utter poverty of spirit. So he concludes: "I shall glory in my infirmities... for when I am weak then I am strong". V.10



Isn't that a mistake, Paul? You mean that you are sometimes weak, sometimes strong? No, says Paul, **when I am weak then I am strong!** This is the language of one who works in partnership with the Lord. When he empties himself in poverty of spirit, then the Lord comes strongly in.

\* \* \* \*

### POVERTY A STEP TO LOVE

"We make the reality of the world for ourselves by our attachment. It is the reality of the Ego transferred into things. This is in no wise objective reality, for that is only discernable through complete detachment. Attachment is nothing else than an **inadequate** sense of reality". (Simone Weil)

The relationship of a living person with things and with other persons can be of **two kinds**: The **relationship of having**, possessing, experienced in gripping to myself, of value to me; and the **relationship of being**, in which the thing or person relates to me in the mystery of its independent reality and individuality.

The relationship of having, possessing, gripping to myself, limiting to my horizons (though I think I am enriched) is a dreadful limitation. The relationship of being, relating to one who stands out in **BEING**, built in uniqueness, is enrichment in **LOVE**.

#### 1. Two men look at an oak tree.

The knowledge of the first is confined to the quantity of firewood he can obtain from it, a ridiculous limitation of an **OAK!**



## Hope Poverty

The artist in the second man enters into communion with the spreading Oak, standing so firmly in the ground in all its beauty!

2. The mother who knows her child only for the joy he gives her moulds him to her image of him, frightfully limiting him, refusing to know him in the grandeur of a man in the process of growth! She cannot rejoice in his individuality, standing out different from her, yet HER SON!

3. The man who 'uses' a prostitute, achieves the contradiction of relating to a human being and at the same time reducing her to the temporary possession of a mere instrument of his sexual pleasure. This sacrilegious caricature of love in its own sphere is a most lamentable outrage!

Possession is in a certain sense an enrichment of the ego. It is at the same time a limitation at the level at which possession is located. I am master, ofcourse, of what I possess, but more subtly, and without my knowing it, I am its slave.

Dispossession, poverty helps me to cease to limit the world to the measure of my needs, in order to be open to the plenitude of being: "He that shall lose his life shall find it". Mt. 16,25.

Poverty comprises detachment and renunciation. But that is only the reverse side of reality. One who wishes to go up to the first floor of a house must, ofcourse, leave the ground floor. But we do not say that he has left the ground floor. We say he has gone up to the first floor!

Poverty frees me from the narrowness of my 'relationship of possession' wherein I confine another, and enables me to have access to an infinitely more profound relationship, es-



entially richer, by which I reach another as OTHER, as being, as self, as independent existence!

May we venture a definition of the canonical vow of poverty: "It is the decision taken by a subject to place herself voluntarily in the actual conditions of, and to identify herself with, a social organisation which, free-ing her to the greatest extent possible from the requirements of ownership entailed by ordinary life, enables her more easily to concentrate her quest on that PLENARY RELATIONSHIP WITH BEING AS THE OBJECT OF EXISTENCE! THIS IS LOVE!"

The first step will be an attitude of respect, of consideration towards being, seeing spontaneously in them primarily their own entity, their beauty, their significance.

There follows increasing ease, freedom of spirit, a certain independence in respect of all being exterior to myself. I am no longer slave to their utility in my regard.

There will and must follow GENUINE LOVE, the essentially richer relationship by which I reach another AS OTHER, as a being, a self, an independent existence, in respect, IN LOVE!

### **POVERTY OF SPIRIT IS A STEPPING STONE TO LOVE.**



## 16

### FAITH OBEDIENCE

#### Mystery or Madness!

*"I am free!*

*And against a man who is free  
God Himself can do nothing!"*

Thus spoke the French atheist Jean Paul Satre in the  
Prison camp Gulag 17, in World War II.

*But one interjected:*

*"If God has become man for you?"*

*And Satre responded:*

*"What God could be that crazy"!*

THE MYSTERY AND THE MADNESS!



**MYSTERY:** The deep hidden reality of God, lost among men. Here the obedient Son of God made man, redeeming us by his humble obedience.  
Rom 5,19

**MADNESS:** The absurdity of sacrificing the God given gift of freedom and self determination!

To the proud claim of absolute independence there is only one answer: **DIVINITY THAT HUMBLY OBEYS!**

### THE MYSTERY AND THE MADNESS.

\* \* \* \*

Let us first clarify some terms connected with obedience:

#### **AUTHORITY**

In its etymology speaks of a source of life, of increase, not of a table thumping tyrant!

#### **OBEDIENCE**

in Latin or Greek or Hebrew translates "hearing" audience, listening-in, in partnership.

**CON Science** bespeaks a knowledge **with**

"alone **with God** who speaks in the Depths" GS 16 surely not independant of God and Church!

#### **RESPONSE ABILITY**

tells of an answer in dialogue with God a person capable of responding, glad to respond.

#### **DELEGATION - ACCOUNTABILITY**

Delegation is shared authority. Authority awaits response. That is given when we acknowledge that we are accountable to authority in the name of God. So the relationship Delegation Accountability is a reciprocal relationship, which is richest when the more the Superior delegates, the closer, the more spontaneous is the response in accountability.



## Faith Obedience

Freedom is not license. Freedom is for commitment!

### SCRIPTURE MEANING OF OBEDIENCE

**BEN SIRACH :** Freedom and Responsibility

"It was He who created man in the beginning  
and He left him in the power of his own inclination.

If you will you can keep the commandments, and to act  
faithfully is a matter of your own choice.

He has placed before you fire and water:

Stretch out your hand for whichever you wish.

Before a man are life and death

And whichever he chooses will be given to him.

For great is the wisdom of the Lord

He is mighty in power and sees everything.

His eyes are on those who fear Him,

and he knows every deed of man.

He has not commanded anyone to be ungodly,

and he has not given any one permission to sin. 15, 14-20

#### **ROMANS 5,19**

"As by the disobedience of one man (Adam) many were made sinners, so by the obedience of ONE MAN (Christ) many are made just".

Sin is disobedience, separation, being 'constituted a sinner'.  
Obedience is being joined with God again.

Redemption is obedience to the Father at a price!

It was not Christ's physical death that saved us. Else the Jews, Pilate, the soldiers would be our redeemers. They put Christ to death.

No. It was the obedience of the Son of God made man, joined in solidarity with every man, that 'saved' us, i.e. took us back to the Father in filial obedience. The physical death was the



price he paid for standing firm in His witness to the Father:  
 "The Father and I are one". Jn 10,30

## HEBREWS 5

Reveals the depth meaning of obedience.

Reveals the precious tie that made obedience possible.

The Son of Man, in His human weakness, the High Priest at His work of obedient redemption, comes to the garden of Olives, to His redeeming agony!

The dialogue with the Father reveals the tie that made obedience possible: YOU ARE SON - tie of identity

YOU ARE A PRIEST FOR EVER - redeemer

(to be priest is to be son is to be redeemer!)

So He was heard for His godly reverence!

So He learns obedience by what He suffers!

Come deep in prayer; follow the dialogue.

What did the Father say in this so briefly deported exchange?

Note the three stages in this prayer:

1. "Let this chalice pass".
2. "If this chalice cannot pass, but I must drink it..."  
 The angel is sent to strengthen Him. The agony ends with the sweat of blood Lk. 22,44
3. "The cup my Father gave me, shall I not drink it?" Jn 18,11 He is right on top!

WHAT DID THE FATHER REVEAL TO HIM? WHAT WAS THE TURNING POINT? THE FATHER IS NO TYRANT!



## Faith Obedience

Did the Father draw His Son, recalling to Him the Wisdom, the Strength, the Love of the plan of salvation?

Did He say to his human/divine Son: "Son, I can entrust this difficult, this heroic task to you, because you are Son. An outsider, a servant would run. BUT YOU, SON, I CAN TRUST.

"He was heard for His godly reverence" Hebr 5,7

He was given again the "reasons" for this difficult obedience. His obedience, through agony, is total, filial, redeeming!

### THE ECCLESIAL DIMENSION OF OBEDIENCE

Our obedience in the Church today (ecclesial) is  
**not the obedience of children**

who must do what they are told because they are too immature to understand. We are adults.

**not the obedience of 'traffic regulation'**

someone must be in charge of the cooperative venture of the community.

**not the obedience of sacrifice for sacrifice sake**

- a negative that kills.

### BUT AN ECCLESIAL OBEDIENCE:

God's concrete way to man

through **Christ**

in His **Church**

in my **Congregation**

in the **Superior** according to the  
Charism and Constitutions

**"I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED"**

2 Tim 1,12



## THE NEW OBEDIENCE

The Vatican Council P.C.14 first gives us the grand example of Jesus, in His filial though difficult, obedience in the Garden. Then it spells out the new obedience:

1. Preserving the dignity and maturity of the human person.
2. Guaranteeing the enlarged freedom that brings an active and responsible obedience, a glad obedience.
3. Clearly spells out the role of the Superior as "one having to render an account to God, as docile to God's will, working in the spirit of service and love, as listening willingly, encouraging person-contribution, but finally deciding what is to be done and requiring the doing of it". (legislative and executive role).

THIS IS ENRICHING, ENNOBLING  
OBEDIENCE, SURELY!

## CHARISMATIC OBEDIENCE

The charismatic Church is not the creation of our day. St. Paul depicts the charismatic church in 1 Cor cc 12/14

**Charism**, says St. Paul is the "particular gift of the Spirit given for the common good", not merely for the individual. 1 Cor 12,7.

The variety of gifts come from the one, the same Spirit, and therefore unite in one Body. **TOGETHER WE ARE CHRIST'S BODY.**

Ch 12,4-13

There is a hierarchy of gifts i.e. the sacred order (hier-arche) Apostles first the authority on which the Church is built.

v 27-30



## Faith Obedience

**THE DIALOGUE** of the community of faith must give us the will of God for us today:

1. logos, LOGOS: the human word must spell **THE DIVINE WORD**.
2. DIA means through-and-through i.e. through the centre who is the Crucified Christ led by His Spirit and spelled in the charism of the Congregation.

**THE CHARISM** of the Congregation is the criterion of discernment, the deciding factor, as coming through present events on which we dialogue.

The Superior invites **every** member of the community to bring her gifts of nature and grace to the dialogue. As individual member of community, she brings her own gifts of nature and grace to the dialogue. As Superior she directs the dialogue through the Centre that is the Charism of the congregation, inviting-in those who go off at a tangent, directing to, the centre whose inclined to group in cliques, sections (heresy), and then "stabs" at the decision as the charism gives it.

It is not her decision, it is not her bias, it is not her infallibility. **IT IS THE APPROVED CHARISM SPELLED OUT IN CONCRETE TERMS TODAY.**

We are happy to discover that the community of faith gifts us the will of God in a dialogue of obedience.

N.B. Even with individual Sisters and individual decisions, a similar method is applied according to circumstances. A novice- mistress taught her novices, from the very beginning of their training: you study the point, you pray over it, you come to dialogue with me. The decision is taken by the Superior according to the Constitutions. So the human ties-in



with the divine and God speaks in the Church through human beings and the Church approved Charism.

## ENNOBLING VIRTUE - OBEDIENCE

St. Ignatius Loyola, in his Letter on Obedience, brought the whole man to gift himself to God: act, will, intellect. The noblest powers of man are gifted in obedience. He never spoke of totally blind obedience, but only of 'a certain kind of blind obedience' where the will bows to the authority, though the 'reasons' are not communicated or difficult to understand.

Fr. Karl Rahner, writing on the occasion of the 4th Centenary of the Society of Jesus, says: Let go egoism, let go to REALITY, LET GO TO LOVE! Obedience is the one act that can be our contribution in love!

## SPOUSAL OBEDIENCE

Because we are locked-in in a partnership of love, our obedience can become Spousal Obedience:

"an unrequired, special surrender  
of one's personal life  
to Jesus Christ speaking in the flesh,  
through the Church today,  
in incarnated structure!

that Jesus Christ  
can command in concrete ways  
through human instruments,  
in those areas reserved to a spouse!  
not normally subject to review by any other person,  
that is a partner whose whole life future  
is bound up with one's own personal  
decisions and growth."

David Knight S.J.



Faith Obedience

## LET US PRAY

*The sinful person clings in pride to her own ideas, her own choices, and builds her own world away from God, away from REALITY.*

*Jesus, You come to take us back to the Father, in obedience, back to REALITY. Only the Father's will is REALITY.*

*You make of obedience your filial reply to the Father, ABBA, FATHER You prayed.*

*You let your Father spell out again to your empty soul in the garden the wisdom, the strength, the love of the plan of salvation.*

*You learned in the garden "the reasons" for obedience. I am always wanting reasons.*

*You learned through your sweat of blood!*

*Then you said the Peter: "The cup my Father gave me shall I not drink it"?*

*So obedience had become a joy and privilege, because of your loyalty, your filial loyalty.*

2. *Shall I learn the ties that bind to the Father?  
Shall I stop standing outside and come right in?  
Shall I be no more servant, but friend,  
Shall I be daughter, shall I be spouse?*

*Make of my religious obedience and act of love.  
Give me faith to see You in your Church, in the very human instruments and structures in which You command me today.  
Make my obedience spousal, a privilege of the partnership I profess with you.*

*Take me to the Father in full, prompt, loving obedience.*



# 17

## JESUS BUILDS COMMUNITY

### At the feet of His Apostles Jn 13

When we read chapter 13 of St. John, we are struck by the solemn introduction, so parallel with the Prologue: "Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from table... and went to the feet of His Apostles

.....

.....

that you may have part with Me."  
To what is this solemn introduction?  
To the washing of the feet? No!  
To His binding of us to Himself in one Body,  
to the new intimacy with the Father and Himself,  
in His **community of Faith and Love.**



He rises from table - all eyes are on Him; He removes His outer garments, takes basin and towel and begins to wash...

Is He Servant? Mother? Youngest, dearest of all?

He comes to Simon Peter, and Peter objects: "Lord, do you wash my feet?". Jesus says: "What I am doing now you do not know, but afterward you will understand". Peter is adamant: "You shall never wash my feet". vv 6-8

Jesus has Peter's foot in his left hand, in a firm grip! His eyes are on Peter's begging permission to wash his feet! All his life Peter will never forget the pressure on that foot and the appeal in the eyes of Jesus! The Almighty begging for entry into Peter's life!

When he understands "part with me" then he surrenders fully: "not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well".

Jesus resumes His place. "Do you realise what I have done for you?" Not an act of humility, but joining them to Himself in love. "You ought also to wash one another's feet".

How wrong was that preacher who thought he was original in telling Mother Superior to wash the feet of the Community! He did not even read aright! "You ought to wash **one another's** feet".

A MUTUAL BINDING TO ONE ANOTHER, IN ONE BODY, IN ONE COMMUNITY. That is the lesson.

The whole atmosphere, the whole context is the Eucharist:

- "He loved them to the uttermost"
- "I do not call you servants but my friends"
- "May the love with which Thou hast loved me be in them and I in them" c 17,26



- "I desire that those Thou hast given me may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which Thou hast given me in Thy love for me" c. 17,24
- "The glory which Thou gave me I have given to them that they may be one even as we are one. I in them and Thou in me, that they may be perfectly one" c. 17,22

## THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH AND LOVE

We are happy to discover that the Community of Faith gift us the will of God in a dialogue of obedience,

And that the Community of Love brings Christ alive in our midst in a Eucharist of sacrificing Love.

\* \* \* \*

## COMMUNITY OF FAITH - COMMUNITY OF LOVE

There are various definitions of community:

### THE SOCIOLOGIST

defines community as group formation, to carry out goals with efficiency. The goal draws them, even compels them.

GESELSHAFT: "good samaritan without a heart"?

### THE PSYCHOLOGIST

reminds us that quality and depth of interpersonal relationships is what forms community and helps members grow. GEMEINSHAFT!

### THE THEOLOGIAN

looks to the Trinity for his inspiration, where individuality is preserved and underlined by interpersonal relationships.  
When in the Garden of Olives the Son cries out



ABBA FATHER (Mk 14,36) His sonship is underlined.

When the Father testifies: "This is my beloved Son", He underlines His fatherhood! Mk 1,10  
The Spirit is the love between Father and Son.  
So Paul says: "God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying out Abba, Father"

Gal 4,6

\* \* \* \*

### IT TAKES STRONG INDIVIDUALS TO FORM COMMUNITY

Individuals strong enough to go out & relate to others. A normal individual must have a true image of himself: of himself as **integrated whole**, a oneness and coherence that gives him a certain **self-esteem** and a certain **independence**.

Then he is ready to go out to others, confident of acceptance. He can socialize, find achievement in the gift of himself, and even develops a certain dependence.

We must build such individuals, with a sense of their worth and value. So that they can stand on their own feet, and be ready to take the risk of self gift, confident of acceptance.

What a mistake we make when we call some people "selfish". Why, they have never been given the chance to be themselves, to have a confident image of themselves!

We have the modern 'allergy' of weak spines! No one able to stand on her own, seeking to lean on the next person, and that one on the next - all equally weak and wobbly!



Let us repeat: WE NEED STRONG INDIVIDUALS TO  
FROM TRUE COMMUNITY INDIVIDUALS STRONG  
ENOUGH TO GO OUT AND GIFT THEMSELVES.

\* \* \* \*

## VIRTUES OF COMMUNITY LIVING

### 1. JUSTICE -

respecting God-given rights,  
rights given through Constitution and obedience,  
rights of Superiors, of Sisters, of the neighbour  
committed to our apostolate.

We bow to those rights. We gladly build them  
according to those rights.

### 2. APPRECIATION

Appreciation contains the root 'price', 'prize',  
'value'.

It takes a practised eye to see qualities in others.

It takes heart to value those qualities!

You know the story of the old monk who could always  
see something good in the worst of us? When the village  
boys wanted to catch him they brought an old, sick mangy  
dog on a string: "Now say something good"! The old monk  
looked calmly a while and quietly said: "What wonderful teeth  
it has!" (the last thing to go in dog) WHAT A MAN HE  
WAS TO BE ABLE TO SPOT THAT!!!

It takes an eye, it takes a heart, it takes the  
effort to find the best in the worst of us!

HAVE YOU FOUND A QUALITY IN YOUR SISTER?  
ARE YOU A POSITIVE PERSON?



### 3. FORGIVENESS

In a community of grown ups! not children!

We belong to the Body of the Redeemer.

"If we say we have no sin, we make Him a liar"

Jn 1,8

When we learn to recognise our sinfulness we can more easily forgive others.

"Every one who wants to build community must have a fair-sized cemetery in which to bury the faults of friends".

FORGIVENESS THAT ACCEPTS AGAIN!  
THAT TRUSTS AGAIN!

### 4. CREATIVE AFFILIATION

Affiliation means approaching another, to be creative, to build up! A more expressive word than 'love'. One practical way is **THE WORD OF PRAISE**

- I wipe my spectacles clean and put them on.
- I can see what I never saw before: the good in others!
- I have become a positive person!
- And now, without delay, in a simple way, I come out with it, I express it. I **COMMUNICATE MY APPRECIATION**.

Sr. Julie was in charge of a kitchen that catered to four communities; such a variety, such different tastes! How many times did she get a word of appreciation?

One night, when I came late for a meeting with the Provincial, the parlour girl said: "Father, the Provincial has gone up. She will see you tomorrow. But your supper is ready".

I caught the whiff of a good fish curry!



"Girl, I said, where is Sr. Julie? I was told she had gone up"

"Go call Sr. Julie" I said.

Sr. Julie comes down and asks: "Father what has happened"

"Oh, Sister, I said, a wonderful fish curry has happened"!

Sr. Julie was so excited that the whole community knew before morning. "Father appreciated my fish curry"! And the result for me was that for the next days there were better and better fish curries!

A WORD OF PRAISE, A SMACK OF THE LIPS, AND  
SR. JULIE IS BUILT! GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE.

\* \* \* \*

## TYPES OF COMMUNITY

A Psychologist who helped build Sisters in the United States summaries types of community:

1. **RIGID COMMUNITY** Where rules and regulations are the totality of community. Good and necessary for military training and battle formation; good and even necessary for drill and alertness, but lacking feel and heart.

2. **MOTHERING COMMUNITY** All feel and consideration for weakness and hurt - ready with a pillow (Physical or psychological) but no one is given a chance to rough things out, for learning the hard way. They say they love one another, but no one is allowed to grow!

3. **FANTASY COMMUNITY** Where goals are pure fantasy! We love all the poor, we feel for the suffering of



## Jesus Builds Community

the whole wide world — but the one next to us demands too practical an approach! We live by the slogans we conjure up, we march in protest, feeding on our slogans!

4. **CREATIVE COMMUNITY** Johnny goes to the house of his friend and calls out from below: "Tommy, Tommy". The mother appears: "What do you want Tommy for"? Says Johnny: "Send Tommy for a swim". Says the mother: "Tommy will never go near the water until he had learned to swim".

Unless Tommy goes into the water, swallows half of it, but leaves enough to swim, unless Tommy learns the hard way....

or

"Darling, will that teacher never learn to be less demanding! Come, I will do your homework for you". So darling never grows up, never makes an effort, never becomes an adult.

**CREATIVE COMMUNITY** loves enough:

- to spot the ability, according to the personal build up
- to set an attainable goal, with a degree of stretching out
- to entice, to encourage to achieve
- to rejoice in the growth!

\* \* \* \*

## **SUPERIOR AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITY**

The Superior is a member of community, like every other member. And as such she has rights and claim to the wealth of community and to the love of each member; to find welcome, appreciation, forgiveness, and to be built up!



As Superior, her role is to be the heart of community, the focus of unity, the builder of community in love, according to the charism of the Congregation.

So we must be wary of the tendency to isolate the Superior, or pressurize her, in a false sense of democracy.

A community of Juniors, falsely led, determined to re-write their constitutions, nothing less. They approached a counsellor who in his prudence told them, in no uncertain terms, that they had written themselves off as a community, because they had no **focus of authority**, of unity. They paid no heed to his advice. They went ahead, and within a short time the house was empty, the members had flown away, the building was bought by the Archbishop! Good psychology demands the Superior as focus of unity at the heart of community. So does the Church.

In the dialogue of obedience, the Superior has a double role: As **individual member**, She contributes as does every one else, according to her gifts of nature and grace.

In her distinctive role of **Superior** she must draw the dialogue through the centre, which is the Charism of the Congregation, prevent members from going off at a tangent, or breaking up into cliques (section=heresy.)

And finally, as the Council directs, she must decide what is to be done and require the carrying out of the decision.  
P.C. 14

THE SUPERIOR IS NOT INFALLIBLE -  
THE CHARISM IS!

\* \* \* \*



Jesus Builds Community

## BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Learning to trust  
begins in the CONFIDENCE of  
being held without falling,  
being fed without a struggle,  
being loved without earning it,  
encouraged without being smothered,  
guided without losing freedom,  
pleasured without debt!

Ed. Draper

Has the Congregation, the community, the Superior, each single member to build this confidence?

Is this only for beginners, or is it an on-going continuous process?

\* \* \* \*

## LET US PRAY

*Lord Jesus, you came from a Community, the Community of the Trinity, where strong, distinct Individuals relate in knowledge and love. It was your constant effort to build your Apostles into community. With what patience you taught by word and example, never tiring! You attended to each according to individual need, character, even whim! Simon, Philip, James, John, till at last, when the Holy Spirit came to complete your work, they were one - THE TWELVE!*

*We in community are so diverse, so different from one another! Help us to accept one another, respecting in Justice the rights You gave to each. Teach us to forgive as grown ups should, and to accept after forgiving. Make us positive persons, with eyes to see the good in the least of us, with*



*hearts to help each other grow through our word of praise,  
gladly given.*

*Pray for us to the Father, as You did at the Last Supper:*

*"May they be one, that the world may believe that you  
sent me, May they be perfectly one"*

*"These are those you gave me, Your gift to me"*

*"May they see, may they share the glory I had with You  
before the world was made"*

*Jn. 17*

*The Father will hear Your prayer,*

*and weld us into your Community of Faith and Love.*



## 18

### HIS MOTHER AND MINE

#### A visit with Our Lady

Devotion to the Mother of our Lord is not an ornament in the Catholic system, a prettiness, a superfluity, one of many, which we may or may not use. It is an integral part of Christianity. A religion would not, strictly speaking, be Christian without it; it would be different from the religion God has revealed. Our Lady is a distinct ordinance of God and a special channel of grace.

*How close to God, how full of God  
Dear Mother must thou be;  
For still the more we know of God  
The more we think of thee.  
(F.W. Faber)*



At a hill station, where different denominations of Christians went for holidays, one shoemaker was puzzled and asked me: "What kind of Christian are you?" When I hesitated, he asked again "Are you the christian that honours the mother"? "Yes" I said readily. And he added "If you honour the son you must honour the mother"! (Indianisation?)

A catholic boy found himself in a Protestant Sunday school. The Pastor came round to check their progress. "Let me hear you say your prayers" he said. Off went our little Catholic, full speed into the Our Father, so fast he could not apply the brakes and skidded into the Hail Mary. Said the Pastor: "We don't have to hear about her. Move on to the Creed". Full speed ahead again, till he came to "born of the virgin....". He turned to the Pastor: "Sir" he said "Here she comes again!" Yes, she comes interwoven with her Son in the Catholic system.

At a retreat to high school girls in Chicago, I was on a talk about Our Lady. A girl at one end of the classroom sat with legs crossed, pointedly looking out of the window. At the other end a second was smoking!

"Not interested?" I asked. Pat came the answer: "Who is interested in a lady in blue velvet, sitting on a cloud, a golden crown on her head?"

"Oh, oh! Where did you get that from? Some picture or statue in the church? Take out your Bibles and let us find the real Lady".

We spent a very interesting hour, meeting the REAL LADY IN HER JOYS AND SORROWS.



## A VISIT WITH OUR LADY

This is an American term, visiting **with**. It implies real meeting, exchanging values, feelings, purpose.

So we must go to Nazareth. But where? To the village well, of course, where all the women meet.

"Where does Our Lady live?"

"Our Lady? There is no such person!"

"Ofcourse Our Lady", I insist, till one catches. "Oh, she means that Joseph's wife". "She lives there", pointing in a vague direction.

It is Fr. Karl Rahner who makes the point: we do not realise enough that He was lost among us, so much one of us, common man of common earth!

Mother of God, no Lady thou  
Common woman of common earth.  
Our Lady ladies call thee now,  
But Christ was never of gentle birth  
Common man of common earth!

(Mary Coleridge)

I go in the direction pointed, and scan the simple houses. What am I looking for? A board marked "Son of God?" Till one points again: "Yes, that is the house". Modest, simple, one among many. I go up and knock. The door opens quietly and there stands a woman, with apron on, broom and pan in her hands.

The large and lovely lesson  
You taught with little breath  
In the liturgy of labour  
In the house of Nazareth



Are such fantastic simple things  
That mortals may presume  
To call the queen of Seraphim  
Our Lady of the broom!

J.G. Shaw

I want to ask: "Are you,... are you...are you...(Our Lady)"  
With a quick smile, she says: "Come, come, we are very  
simple people here. YOU CAME TO MEET MY SON? (He  
is her whole life!) He is with Joseph in the carpentry, at the  
back."

"Later, I say. Let us sit together a while. I want to speak  
with you first:

WHAT IS YOUR SECRET, MOTHER OF GOD?  
WHAT IS LIFE WITH HIM LIKE?"

LIFE WITH HIM?

great adventure!  
dismaying surprises!  
but He fills your heart.  
Just let Him in.

## THE ANNUNTIATION

He swept me off my feet... that angel!  
I questioned.... he answered.  
What joy to say FIAT with all my being!  
Virgin, Mother, Handmaid (maid-at-hand:  
cultured, eager, ready partner)

## VIRGIN

One day  
a virgin of Israel  
was capable of pronouncing  
the SACRED NAME



His Mother and Mine

with all her heart,  
with all her mind,  
with all her being,  
with all her body:  
in such a way  
that in her  
THE WORD BECAME FLESH!

Charles Hallows

**THE VISITATION**

I took Him to Elizabeth  
and He sanctified John in his mother's womb.  
This is my role: bringing Him to You!  
MAGNIFICAT with all my being!

**JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM**

All the long way, and in my state!  
Obedience to a tyrant's whim?  
Obedience to the prophecy: 'born in  
David's city'  
I bend over Him in my womb  
I HAD HIM ALL THE WAY!  
No room in the inn...naturally!  
that comes of belonging to dead royalty!

**THE BIRTH OF CHRIST**

My God before my eyes, and in my arms...  
My God...my child!  
Angels, shepherds, magi...  
and a manger! WHAT A COMBINATION!  
Glory to God...Peace to men  
poor, humble...DIVINE



## TO HER CHILD

O shut your bright eyes that mine must endanger  
With their watchfulness; protected by its shade  
Escape from my care; what can you discover  
From my tender look but how to be afraid?  
Love can but confirm that more it would deny.  
Close your bright eyes.

Sleep! What have you learned from the womb  
that bore you  
But an anxiety your Father cannot feel?  
Sleep! What will the flesh that I gave you do for you  
Or my mother love, but tempt you from His will?  
Why was I chosen to teach His Son to weep?  
Little One, sleep.

Dream! In human dreams earth ascends to heaven  
Where no one need pray nor ever feel, alone.  
In your first few hours of life here, O have you  
Chosen already what death must be your own?  
How soon will you start on the Sorrowful Way?  
Dream while you may.

W.H. Auden

## FLIGHT INTO EGYPT, GO TO NAZARETH

Silent Joseph obeys.  
God's ways are not as our ways.  
HE SHALL BE CALLED A NAZARENE,  
said the prophecy!

## PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

Simeon! He stopped my breath!  
In the fulness of my womanhood  
I present the Lord of the temple to His Father,  
in my arms! My offertory.



"This child is set..." Lk 2,34  
I MUST ACCEPT HIM, SWORD AND ALL!

### LOSS IN THE TEMPLE

Three days of anguish,  
and He says: How is it you sought me?  
His Father's business!  
I KEEP PONDERING IN MY HEART

### NAZARETH

I taught Him how to pray.  
HE TAUGHT ME HOW TO PRAY!  
The dialogue between the human and the divine!

### Parting

I must let Him go  
to insults, rejection, death.  
HIS FATHER'S BUSINESS!

### CANA

He is building His Apostles.  
I learn to penetrate His meaning.  
WHEN IS HIS HOUR?

### PARTNERSHIP

"Blessed are they who hear the word of God  
and keep it". Lk 11,27  
HIS HIGHEST PRAISE! INTIMACY WITH  
HIM IN FAITH!

### Jesus and Mary

What was between them was like this  
Sunlight! It was vibrant and fierce.  
Beyond what we have come to show  
as tenderness. I'd guess that she



was always checking her ground, her  
Humanity careful in the  
Heat of what in Him was divine.

He left her  
not an inch of coolness...  
He never dismissed her  
but pushed harder through the closed  
places till there was nothing left  
but oneness, so that now we sift  
Her for a glimpse of Him as she only could see.

...I feel them tremble in  
everything that makes me real.

I FEEL THEIR FIRE: A LOVE STEEL.

Ian Caws

### THE LAST SUPPER

Feast of love!  
Washing His Apostles' feet - "part with Me"  
My flesh and blood - HIS FLESH AND BLOOD!  
"Those Thou hast given me: let them be one!  
let them see the glory..." Jn 17

### AT THE CROSS

THE HOUR HAS COME!  
I stand by His Cross,  
I stand in witness, in partnership,  
I stand offering Him to the Father  
O DIVINITY! IN UTTER HUMANITY!

Mother of God, He broke thy heart  
that it might wider be;  
that in the vastness of its love  
there might be room for me.

F.W. Faber



One Mother bends on far-off hill  
And fits her limbs  
The way she fit her life  
To match the contours of His will  
Joan Sauro csrj

\* \* \* \*

### LIFE WITH HIM?

Great adventure  
Dismaying surprises  
BUT HE FILLS YOUR HEART.  
Just let Him in.  
JUST LET HIM RIGHT IN!

\* \* \* \*

### WOMAN

Woman is the one who is  
Sensitive to the feelings of others.  
"they have no wine". In 2

Woman in her gentle STRENGTH, her ability to love  
with a fierceness that can withstand all,  
her willingness to forget herself totally  
for the one she loves!

that no danger is too great, no ministry too small,  
no waiting too long, no pain too deep  
to separate her from THE ONE SHE LOVES!



## VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL

Daughter of the Father, chosen Eve,  
Drawn into counsels of the Trinity,  
What plan did Wisdom there unfold to thee  
That brought Him down to our humanity?

Mother of the Son. 'twas at thy knee  
The almighty learned of our infirmity,  
And fixed Himself upon the gibbet tree  
The challenge of eternal Verity!

Spouse of the Spirit, Mother me,  
Grace is thine for such as we.  
Lift up His Church to faith and constancy,  
In love, in witness and in purity.

J.V.M.

## MY MOTHER AND THINE

O Jesus, do, I pray, transmit to me  
A little of Thy pleasure  
in our Mother's excellence,  
of thy delight in her loveliness,  
her virtue and her grace.

Give me part in Thy sweet filial piety,  
that I may worship and honour her  
more even than I ask her help.

Could she do nothing further for me  
I should still carry her image in my heart  
and look long on her with eyes of wonder,  
as children gaze upon their mother's face  
and grow like to what they love and gaze upon.

Let me, Jesus, see her through Thine eyes,  
And think Thy thoughts of her  
And be in truth Thy sister and her child.



## 19

### WATER and WINE

#### Sensitivity in the Apostolate Jn. 2

**SENSITIVITY** is a counselling word  
to spell a closeness, a feeling with, a  
coming right in, an empathy: I feel and  
suffer with...

**THE SENSE AND MEANING OF SCRIPTURE** is what the  
Evangelist wants to communicate. John's Gospel is a gospel  
of **FAITH** from chapter one to the end.

**Prologue:** "to all who believed in his name he gave  
power to become children of God"

**Cana c.2:** He manifested His glory and His disciples believed  
**Samaria c 4:** many more of the Samaritans believed in Him.



Eucharist c.6: We have believed and come to know that You...  
Martha c. 11: Do you believe this?  
c. 20: What is written is written that you may believe...

\* \* \* \*

Here is St. Jerome's translation of the first miracle of Jesus, in all its dramatic impact:

"And on the third day, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus **was there**. Jesus also was invited, with his disciples to the marriage.

When the wine **began to go low**, the Mother of Jesus said to him: "they have no wine".

Jesus said to her: "WOMAN, what is that to me and to thee. My hour has not come yet".

His Mother said to the waiters: "Do whatever he tells you".

Now there were six water pots of stone, standing there, according to the purification rites of the Jews each to hold two or three measures. (30 or 40 gallons)

Jesus said to them: "Fill the water pots with water", and they filled them up to the brim!

And Jesus said to them: "Draw some out and take it to the chief steward of the feast". And they did so.

When the chief steward had tasted the water, now made wine, and knew not whence it came (though the waiters who had drawn the water knew), the chief steward said to the bridegroom: "Every man at first sets out the good wine, and



when men have drunk well, then that which is worse. But you have kept the good wine until now”.

This, the first of His miracles, Jesus wrought in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory — AND HIS DISCIPLES BELIEVED IN HIM.”

We have three points in this Meditation:

1. **JESUS CHRIST**, Apostle of the Father  
sensitive to the Father,  
sensitive to the needs of the couple,  
sensitive to the need of his Apostles.
2. **THE MOTHER OF JESUS**  
sensitive to human need,  
sensitive to her Divine Son.
3. **THE WAITERS**  
sensitive to the Mother of Jesus,  
and through her to her Divine Son.

## 1. JESUS CHRIST, APOSTLE OF THE FATHER

### Sensitive to the Father:

“The Father and I are one”. Jn 10,30

“I always do the things that please him” Jn 8,29

“My meat, (my food, my sustenance) is to do the will of him that sent me” Jn 4,34

To fulfil the Scriptures He said: “I thirst” Jn 19,28

“Into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit” Lc 23,46

### Sensitive to the needs of his Apostles

“Those Thou hast given me, thy gift to me” Jn 17,6

“I do not call you servants, but my friends”. Jn 15,15

“That they may be one, as you Father and I are one” Jn 17,21

“Let them see the glory thou hast given me”. Jn 17,24



**Sensitive to human need**

The 'Kenosis', the swift descent to humanity, so He can be one with the least of us: Phil 2, 6-8: man, servant, crucified! "He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward" Hebr 5,2 "He had compassion on them" Mk 6,34. He fed them. "A high priest... to sympathize with our weaknesses"

Hebr 4,14

**This double sensitivity**, to the Father and to men, He combines in ONE PERSON. He is no mere arbitrator, belonging to neither side, but a MEDIATOR, belonging to both, bringing God to man and taking man to God.

I see Him enter the marriage feast with His first Apostles, to build them, to help the couple in their need.

**II. THE MOTHER OF JESUS -**

sensitive to the couple's need  
SENSITIVE TO HER DIVINE SON!

The "mother of Jesus was there", says St. John. She was there not as one of the guests. No, as one of the home people, as one who cares, delicately feeling their need (even before they know it) and providing, with her mother's eye, with her mother's heart, O so delicately!

AS THE WINE BEGAN TO GO LOW (St. Jerome). Note carefully, before it failed completely, the eye of a mother, the heart of a mother was watching. THE WINE MUST NOT FAIL! Everything would be ruined for the couple for life! How could they show their faces in public thereafter?

Nobody knew - NOBODY MUST KNOW!

What would I do if I were there? Give the alarm? Stupid!



## Water and Wine

Send to the shopkeepers? Which shopkeepers? They are there at the little village wedding! And shopkeepers are the first to spread the news!

ALL THIS SHE FEELS WITH EXQUISITE SENSITIVITY!

She goes to her Son and whispers: "They have no wine".

Now, feel her sensitivity to the Divine.

Jesus said to her:

WOMAN -

title of honour, of dignity,

woman of the promises of Genesis, of redemption, 3,15

woman at the foot of the Cross, Jn 19,25

woman of the Apocalypse, C 12

"We do not meet on this point" (literally "what is that to me and to thee"),

"My hour has not come yet" -

hour of the passion Jn 12,

hour of His lifting up, when they

stood together. St. Augustine has

always pointed to that hour.

## MYSTERIOUS EXCHANGE

The Evangelist is brief.

What passed between them, without words, only looks?

It is wrong to say she advanced the hour of God; no human being can do that.

SHE PENETRATED DIVINITY where theologians have two interpretations to every man. She says to the waiters: "Do whatever He tells you".



What was between them? She had not spent 30 years with Him for nothing. But I object: Lady, He said His hour has not come yet!

I heard, she says, I heard!

So the miracle takes place, so the couple is saved, so the Apostles are built in faith.

SENSITIVITY TO THE HUMAN, O SO DELICATELY!

SENSITIVITY TO THE DIVINE, O SO DEEPLY!

And when all was saved, where is the Lady? Taking the bows? True Mother, her heart is full, she has provided for her children, she has penetrated to her Son, she has helped to build up the Apostles.

### III THE WAITERS

We must not forget them. They have an important lesson for us. They are in a position in which we often find ourselves. — once removed from the principal actors. And yet, their action is essential. It shows their **sensitivity** to the Lady, and through her to Her Son.

DO YOU REALIZE THAT SENSITIVITY, their difficult task, their delicate task, their baffling task and their utterly loyal cooperation?

They do not know that the wine is failing. NOBODY KNEW THAT! They have done their task of filling the water pots for the ceremonial washing before the meal. That is over.

And here is the Lady saying to them “Do whatever He tells you”. Their loyalty to her makes them ready, and the thought of helping their new rabbi from Galilee!



Then — out of the blue - “FILL THE WATER POTS WITH WATER!” Realise their situation. They are dismayed: waterpots now? There is some mistake. Remember they know nothing of the failing wine. NOT ONE WORD! They fill, up to the brim!

BLIND OBEDIENCE? There is so such virtue as completely blind obedience. For obedience one must know the **authority** of the one who commands (the reasons for the command may be hidden).

**BUT THEY MUST KNOW THE AUTHORITY WHO COMMANDS.**

The Lady they know and respect, and their own new rabbi. **THEY OBEY!** and how, **UP TO THE BRIM** - formula of perfection!

Plain water they poured. **ROYAL WAY OF DOING A SIMPLE DUTY, NO QUESTIONS ASKED!**

Then rings out the second command: “**CARRY TO THE CHIEF STEWARD**”. Dismaying order! This is wrong, this is dangerous. They could lose their jobs! Could one have suggested: Let us disappear, let us save the rabbi embarrassment. Let us be ‘charitable’.

They said nothing of the sort. They carry to the chief steward.

Then see the surprise in his eyes, hear the tone of his voice: “You have kept the good wine until now”!

St. John has a touch here: **AND THE STEWARDS WHO HAD DRAWN THE WATER KNEW!** They alone knew the secret. How their hearts were filled! They had been privileged to save the couple. They had brought renown on the Rabbi.



They had helped build the Apostles! So the Lord rewards their humble, loyal obedience. *Diakonoi* St. John calls them, not *douloi* (deacons, not servants or slaves).

### GRASP THE SENSITIVITY OF THE WHOLE AFFAIR.

When the new wine was provided, no one even averts to the fact that there was a threat of the wine failing. The good name of the couple was never in jeopardy! not with the delicacy of the Lady and the humanity of her Son and the close cooperation of the waiters.

THIS IS APOSTOLATE, SENSITIVITY TO THE HUMAN, SENSITIVITY TO THE DIVINE.

THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF THE MIRACLE WAS TO BUILD THE FAITH OF THE APOSTLES. The Miracle is the means.

They learned to believe in Him, their Lord and Rabbi  
Did they learn to look at the mother of Jesus with new eyes?

### COME, APOSTLES OF CHRIST

When you go to Cana, do not take water - they need wine!  
When you go to the world, do not take 'wine, women and song'. THEY NEED THE BLOOD OF CHRIST!

Like the guests at Cana, they do not even sense their need. Can you make them sensitive to that need?

THEY NEED THE BLOOD OF CHRIST!

Did I hear you say you do not have it?

Go to the Lady, Queen of Apostles. She will teach you to be sensitive to the deep, real needs of men. She will lead you to her Son. She will teach you to be sensitive to His Divinity. Then rejoice with her when He provides royally.

\* \* \* \*



## LET US PRAY

1. *"No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. Come to me" ... Mt. 11,27*

*Lord Jesus Christ, Apostle of the Father, fill us with love for the Father, as you loved Him. Gift us the joy of revealing Him by our word, but more especially by the lives we lead.*

*You became man and took on our human weakness. Give us, your apostles, the sensitivity to be fully human, truly human, that we may feel the need of those to whom we are sent. Most of all, give us the sensitivity to feel their need of God. And give us the joy of bringing them to the Father's love.*

2. *Mary, Mother, Queen of Apostles, gift us eyes to see, gift us hearts to feel, and the delicacy to handle human need as you did.*

*Teach us to come close to your Son, so that we may bring men and women to God.*

*Help us to make our own that prayer of the Church at the offertory of the Mass, when the wine is mixed with the drop of water, when both, wine and water, are turned into the blood of Christ, your Son: "May we be made partakers of His divinity who became partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God for ever. Amen.*



## 20

### CAN YOU DRINK THE CUP

That I shall drink!

Mt 20,20

Mk 10,55

In the school of Jesus Christ the Teacher there are 12 pupils. None of them is from a distinguished family; none of them can bring renown on the class or on the Teacher! Some of them know how to fish, and yet once after a whole night of labour 'they had caught nothing'. In 21,4. Some of them knew how to swim, and yet Peter the cock of the school was invited to walk on the waters to Jesus and nearly drowned! But Jesus took them away from all that, so that there was nothing for them to be a credit to their Master.



## Can You Drink the Cup

Their whole conversation was: what shall we eat, who will be first, and He often caught them at it! He gave class the whole day. Things went in one ear and out the other! Father, he could have prayed, what have you given me! twelve stones? to build a church? Father, let this chalice pass, this soul-draining dealing with mere humans!

And yet, He achieved a great result with them, as He himself testified: They learned to love Him. "The Father loves you because you have loved me" Jn 16,27.  
**HOW DID HE DO IT?**

### **HE RECEIVES EACH AS A GIFT FROM THE FATHER. HE TREATS EACH INDIVIDUALLY.**

- Andrew** has his tie with Jesus as MESSIAH. Jn 1,41  
**Philip** has Jesus as meeting point of Law and Prophets. Jn 1,45  
**Nathanael** is given the vision of Jesus as Mediator between heaven and earth. Jn 1,51  
**Peter** is Jesus' special care:  
Blessed are you Simon bar Jona.. My Father has revealed Mt. 16  
Get thee behind me, Satan. Mt. 16,23  
Bid me come to thee on the waters....Come  
Man of little faith, why did you doubt? Mt. 14,29  
I have prayed for you that your faith fail not... Lk 22,31  
Feed my lambs... Jn 21,17  
You will be crucified. Jn 21,19

\* \* \* \*



How does Jesus deal with James and John? They are making their bid for first places! St. John Chrysostom in his 66th sermon on Mathew's gospel gives us inspiration.

Mark tells us that James and John came to Jesus.

Mathew adds a touch — they came **with their mother**,  
and she makes the first approach.

It was shrewd, it was all woman, it was a mother's approach. What do you want, asks Jesus.

"Command that these two sons of mine shall sit with you, one on your right and one on your left in your kingdom".

These two stalwarts, all I've got to give you, and old Zebedee is gone.

Command — she must make doubly sure,

In your kingdom — she is not asking for earthly preferment!

The approach is well planned, Jesus is caught. What could He say?

We could possibly make a wrong interpretation of the passage that follows. We could say that Jesus **dared them** to drink the cup, and hoped to scare them off! He told them that they did not know what they were asking. Can you drink the cup, can you shed your blood? They had heard him announce his passion. They had some inkling of what the cup meant.

But they were full-blooded youth, sons of thunder (Boanerges).

They looked at one another, they looked at Jesus, **THEY DARED HIM BACK!**

"Yes we can drink the cup"!

Jesus is caught and backs off: "You will drink the cup, but first places are for my Father to grant, not for me".



## WHAT A FALSE INTERPRETATION!

### THIS WAS NEVER HIS WAY, NEVER!!!

His invitation is "take up your cross and follow me

His way is **In**-carnation, right in with us.

His way is partnership: "with me".

He took on our flesh, our burden of sin, made it his own and calls us to carry it **with him**.

You might wonder what had come upon the 2 apostles. You might be shocked that two of the three top Apostles had fallen so low — competing with Peter! Hearing him give the right answers, seeing him joined with Jesus in paying the tax, they make their bid. Mt 17,27

Do not be surprised, says St. John Chrysostom. This was before the coming of the Holy Spirit. Yes, they were imperfect. After the Holy Spirit came, they willingly gave Peter first place, they drank the cup, James first, John last of the apostles. But now their thinking is so different, so human, so utterly human.

And so much in contrast with Jesus' thoughts: I have left my first place in heaven (Phil 2,6), I have gladly descended to earth, to the Cross. Let my Father decide my place. And you come to me for first places? I know only one way — drink the cup.

This, then, is his approach to James and John:

Look, the cup is yours. I have made it mine.

You must drink it, there is no escape.

Alone you find it too difficult.

So shall we drink it together?



He does not say: Can you drink the cup Can you shed your blood. He pointedly adds: **which I shall drink.** So that when their lips meet at the same cup, they were ready!

He has the cup in his hands.  
He takes the first sip,  
then he offers them a sip.  
He draws them, he entices them  
And they say: with you we can!

That is His way - partnership!  
Who knows, when the first sip is taken  
they may even want a second sip!  
might even come to the beatitude of "hungering and thirsting  
for justice" Mt. 5,6.  
The promise is: 'they shall have their fill!!!'

Did the Father teach Him that at the garden?  
"The cup my Father gave me, shall I not drink it"?

Jn 18,11

HAVE YOU LEARNED THE METHOD OF JESUS THE  
TEACHER?

the partnership method?

Can you drink the cup **THAT I SHALL DRINK?**  
He draws, he entices, he allures!  
So that when their lips met at the same cup, they were  
quite ready!



## 21

### JESUS AND MARTHA

#### A Story of Faith & Friendship.

John 11

The sense and meaning of Sacred Scripture is found in the intention of the Sacred Author. John's Gospel is a gospel of FAITH, from the Prologue to the last chapter.

- The Prologue : "To all who believed in Him He gave power to become the sons of God" v 12
- Chapter 2 : "He worked the first of His signs at Cana, and His Apostles believed in Him." v 11
- Chapter 4 : The Samaritans said: "Now we believe... He is indeed the Saviour of the world". v 42



- Chapter 6 : He promises the Eucharist and asks for faith, and Peter says: "We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God". v 69
- Chapter 7-10 : "I am in the Father and the Father in me"  
10,38  
"The Father and I are one" 10,30  
"Before Abraham was, I AM!" 8,58
- Chapter 11 : He says to Martha: "Did I not tell you that if you could believe you would see the glory of God". v 40
- Chapter 20 : "these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ" v 30
- (The miracles of chapters 2, 9, 11 are to establish faith — "that you may believe".)

\* \* \* \*

## JESUS AND MARTHA -

A HUMAN BEING, A WOMAN, AND THE DIVINE MASTER, locked — in Faith & Friendship.

**FAITH** is knowledge by approach to a person. There are other kinds of knowledge, but faith is a peculiar approach **through** a person, **to** a person.

The little ones sit in their first class. The teacher begins:  
C A T cat, C A T cat. And the little ones nod their heads and repeat: C A T cat. What do they know whether CAT is cat or dog or rat? Question the little one, and pat comes the answer: **Teacher said!**



## Jesus and Martha

If one does not like the teacher, he comes home, parents ask: What did you learn in school? - no answer! A look in the book and the parent asks: What is C A T? He answers DOG! What he is really saying is: I don't like the teacher! Give him a teacher he likes and how swiftly he learns and how gladly.

Comes adolescence, and he goes with his problems to such a teacher! The approach to person is precious. It may even become the most cherished knowledge!. It can grow into commitment and partnership.

**DIVINE FAITH IS KNOWLEDGE BY APPROACH TO  
THE DIVINE TEACHER WHICH GROWS INTO  
FAITH COMMITMENT AND PARTNERSHIP!**

There are **there** stages of faith:

1. Proposition, statement, theory - learnt, handed down  
It must be accurate, because it is the take-off point.
2. Cleaving, entry of person, breaking-in, enlargement of  
mind and heart - a difficult stage!
3. Possession of person in commitment - living!

## **FRIENDSHIP**

is mutual faith, in trust  
God and man  
faith on both sides, trust on both sides  
interlocking of persons in love

\* \* \* \*

## **THE SETTING OF ST. JOHN**

After the mighty effort of chapters 5 - 10 was unsuccessful, Jesus is on the threshold of the grand finale:  
The open confession of his Father, backed by the mighty, undeniable miracle of the raising of Lazarus.



He is on the other side of the Jordan. Jn 10,40  
preparing to set his face for Jerusalem,  
to set his face for death on the Cross.

He is communing with his Father:

"The Father and I are one". "I love the Father"

"I lay down my life and I take it up again. Jn 10,17

THE LORD OF LIFE AND DEATH!

### HE NEEDS A PARTNER

A partner to take to the depths of faith.

He never 'uses' a person, He builds her up. But for that He  
will have to take her through the tension, through the cleaving,  
to lock-in with divinity.

He chooses Martha of Bethany!

Martha, who is Jesus?

Good friend, safe in my house, miracle worker!

She had never experienced him as divinity!

### DELIBERATE JESUS

When the message comes "he whom you love is sick", He  
says: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of  
God"

Again He says: "Lazarus my friend is asleep"

Death is sleep? He is going to lay down his own life!

He walks in the light... to Jerusalem!

He stays 2 days longer, till Lazarus dies.

No, He did not kill Lazarus, Lazarus died of natural causes.



## Jesus and Martha

### JESUS BUILDS MARTHA

"Lord, if You had been here my brother would not have died, but even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give you". Jesus as miracle worker?

1. "YOUR BROTHER WILL RISE AGAIN" says Jesus  
Martha answers with proposition from the book:  
"I know... in the resurrection... on the last day". (her voice going softer with uncertainty?)

2. I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME, EVEN IF HE DIES YET SHALL HE LIVE: AND HE WHO LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE. MARTHA DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?

Full teaching, beyond Martha in her broken state. Lord, I want to say, you have come four days late, she is shattered and now you come with your theology!

But Martha responds to HIS PERSON in a true act of faith:

Yes, Lord, I believe that YOU are the Christ, the Son of God...

3. At the grave: REMOVE THE STONE!  
Tension point, cleaving point, entry of person!  
"NO" says Martha, he will stink. I will not let you make a fool of yourself before your enemies! (and she thought she loved Him). But Jesus insists: "DID I NOT TELL YOU THAT IF YOU COULD BELIEVE YOU WOULD SEE THE GLORY OF GOD?"

### Pause

The Jews from Jerusalem are present.. many enemies.  
There is dead silence all around.



Removing the stone from the grave of a man four days buried!  
Tension all around. What will He do?

Jesus lifts up His eyes to the Father and says:  
FATHER I THANK THEE THAT THOU HAST HEARD  
ME.

I KNOW THAT THOU HEAREST ME ALWAYS,  
BUT I HAVE SAID THIS FOR THE SAKE OF THE PEOPLE  
STANDING BY THAT THEY MAY BELIEVE THAT  
THOU DIDST SEND ME.

Open prayer to the Father, open claim to Sonship!

Then He cried **with a loud voice:**

LAZARUS COME FORTH

The voice of command!

The voice that raises the dead!

The dead man comes out.

Where is Martha's look? On Lazarus? or on Jesus?  
So Jesus says: Loose him and let him free".

### **RESULT:**

full proof of His divine Sonship!

backed by the irrefutable miracle of raising the dead.

Result? HE HAS CONDEMNED HIMSELF TO DEATH!  
The Jews make up their minds, Caiaphas gives the  
'reasons'. vv 47-53

Result? MARTHA IS BUILT IN FAITH AND  
FRIENDSHIP!

St. John tells us in Chapter 12 that there was a supper later,  
at which Martha served, Lazarus sat at table, Mary anointed  
His feet. I take the opportunity to meet Martha. "Martha,  
who is Jesus"? Martha will look at me and say nothing. Her



## Jesus and Martha

look seems to say: Is this an idle question, a curious question? I thought I knew Him as good friend, as miracle worker. But now He has broken through. Was He cruel? I have spoken with Him. "Martha, He said, I could not tell you everything before hand. There was no other way. I had to build your faith, and for that I had to cleave your heart. I cleaved my Mother's heart! The human heart is too narrow for Divinity. Martha, do you realize how close I have taken you into my very Divinity - your brother's death, my own death, your own agony over your brother. Friendship, Martha, in faith and commitment!"

## PRAYER

*Lord Jesus, I read in Your gospel that You loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Are You the same Lord today? Do you love me?*

- *Is that why You draw me in my vocation, to bind me to You in faith and friendship?*
- *Lord, my faith is only from the book, proposition faith. Can You make it a living faith? Does that mean that I must spell it out in terms of your Person? in terms of Your Divinity?*
- *You broke Martha's heart, You broke your Mother's heart! Is there no other way for You to enter the human heart? to enter my life? Is my heart too narrow? too human? too merely human?*
- *You said: I am the Resurrection and the Life! Did You mean just physical resurrection? or new, vital, throbbing living with You?*

*Your word of command - REMOVE THE STONE*

- *for forgiveness? The heavy stone of my heart, my pride, my sensitiveness?*



- *for charity in community? The big stone of my important self?*
- *for obedience? The stone of my stubbornness which wants "the reasons"?*

*There you stand in command: REMOVE THE STONE!*

*Help me to accept You **ON YOUR TERMS**  
to accept You **IN FAITH**  
to accept You in utter commitment*

*Then only shall I be locked with You in love and  
friendship!*



## 22

# THE ROAD THAT LOVE TOOK

## The Stations of the Cross

The cross is of man's making,  
heritage of sin, pain, misery and death.

**HIS CROSS** is the instrument of LOVE'S REDEEMING

When **HIS CROSS** is repudiated, human suffering goes on, as never before, but not connected to the Redemption or relieved by Resurrection.

We remain nailed inescapably to the wood that knows no sacrifice, to an altar that knows no redeeming victory!

**BUT HERE IS LOVE INVITING US TO TAKE THE ROAD HE TOOK. COME FOLLOW ME, WALK THE**



ROAD WITH ME, YOUR ROAD WHICH I HAVE  
MADE MINE. COME WALK UNDERSTANDING  
THE WISDOM, SHARING THE STRENGTH, AF-  
FECTED BY MY LOVE.

1. **JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH**

His head is bowed in acceptance,  
Silent and serene amidst all the tumult of false accusation.  
This is the strength of TRUTH.

THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SINS  
OF THE WORLD!

He has got Himself condemned because He took on my  
sins.

Meek and humble, He bows His head in acceptance.

2. **THE CROSS IS LAID ON THE SHOULDERS OF  
JESUS**

He lifts His head, eyes to the Father:

"The cup my Father gave me, shall I not drink it"?

Jn 18,11

His shoulders are squared: The Lion of Judah!

Suffering can destroy and harden - love can give it  
meaning.

Lord, you did not say: He who takes up his joy.....

He looks at me, steps forward and invites: FOLLOW ME.

3. **JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME — Failure!**

Without failure the experience of love is not complete;  
so the Almighty becomes weak. Failure is not punishment.

There is no desperation, no panic, no self-pity,  
no rebellion, no talk of accident or ill luck.

He rises and moves forward.



4. **JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER**

WOMAN, the hour has come!

There was nothing said; only with their eyes grief, entreaty  
and overwhelming love,  
an interior sharing, making His cross hers.  
HAIL MARY!

5. **SIMON OF CYRENE IS FORCED TO CARRY THE CROSS**

The soldiers forced him to carry the Cross Mt 27,32  
Poor Simon! He knew what the Scripture said; "Cursed  
be the man who hangs on a tree" Dt. 21,23  
But the look of Jesus, the touch of that Cross changed  
his heart, and it became joy and privilege!  
So Mark remembers him and his sons, Alexander and  
Rufus...carried the Cross! Mk 15,21

Jesus made an instrument of shame and torture  
a symbol of triumph and love, of honour and glory!

6. **VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS**

This is the theology of the Greek Fathers of the Church.  
An IKON is a living image (VERA IKON = true image)  
painted in prayer and fasting.  
His face is covered with sweat, blood, spittle, dust of the  
road. His face bears the signs of rejection, hatred, sin.  
The reminder, the living image, is gifted to Veronica, to  
me, reminder of my sin and of His redemption.

7. **JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME**

We do not know how many times He fell.

But this second fall has its lessons:

In an age of easy defeat, when dry, hard acts have to be  
performed unseen, unnoticed, here is a lesson of  
PERSEVERANCE UNDER EXHAUSTION.



No self pity, no luxury of discouragement.  
Again He falls, again He rises!

8. **JESUS MEETS THE WOMAN OF JERUSALEM**

Lk 23,27

Their human pity is answered by His loving concern.  
He turns and looks **straight** at them.

The eye of TRUTH - all seeing, will judge the living....  
His heart of love beats for them and for their children:  
"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves... if they do these things in the green wood (myself) what will they do in the dry (you and your children)?"

9. **JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME**

Utter weakness. Suffering seems to have lost its meaning.  
Work that collapses before the end.

But the cross does not melt away. IT IS CARRIED.

"He that perseveres to the end shall be saved. Mt 24,13

He gathers his last ounce of strength...

The cup my Father gave me....

10. **JESUS IS STRIPPED**

This is done to shame Him before the crowd.

But He has nothing to be ashamed of!

He, the Holy of Holies stands before the world:  
thoroughly human - utterly divine!

He was stripped of human support:

His disciples abandoned Him

He was stripped of reputation - a criminal condemned

He was stripped for our sins of the flesh.

11. **JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS**

Divinity in bonds!

In an age of EXPERIMENTALISM, of non-commitment,  
here is a doctrine of stability in love, committed love!



Here is the strength of exact love, ready to be nailed down!

**12. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS**

"Greater love than this no man has" Jn 15,13

Full, loyal obedience to the Father. Rom 5,19

Strength: "When I shall be lifted up, I shall draw.."

Jn 12,32

Redemption: "Remember me". "Today you will be with me" Lk 23,43

Forgiveness: "Father, forgive them" Lk. 23,34 Word of Divinity. OUR FATHER

**13. JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS - INTO THE ARMS OF HIS MOTHER**

Mary - with the body of her son in her lap:

joyful mother,

sorrowful mother,

mother of the redeemed

HAIL MARY

**14. JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB**

Tomb - sign of defeat, dark and silent.

Tomb - planting for Resurrection

"When all things were in deep mid-silence your Omnipotent Word came down". Wisd 18/9

"It is good to wait in silence the salvation of God".

Lam 3/26

HIS DEATH IS MY HOPE, HIS RESURRECTION MY TRIUMPH.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Plenary Indulgence is an invitation from the crucified, His arms opened wide to receive me. I must return all open to God.



## 23

### SOUL OF MY SAVIOUR

SOUL OF MY  
SAVIOUR

Very heart and core of Your being,  
character and personality  
that makes You strong Saviour!

SANCTIFY ME

draw me to You by strong bonds;  
draw me in Your patient love; make  
me whole

BODY OF CHRIST

in Mary's arms,  
in the Eucharist,  
on the Cross,  
mangled in my brothers and sisters,  
in the poor



BE MY SAVING  
GUEST

my welcome Guest,  
my challenging Guest,  
my strengthening Guest,  
my comforting Guest

BLOOD OF MY  
SAVIOUR

price, appeal, sacrifice,  
poured out in lavish generosity  
in the garden at the Agony all the way  
up to end when His heart is priced

BATHE ME IN  
YOUR TIDE  
(inebriate me)

overcome my resistance  
overwhelm me by Your total love  
make me drunk and foolish  
as You were 'foolish' in Your love for  
me.

WATER FROM  
THE SIDE

source of grace, sacramental stream  
In 7,37  
purify, cleanse, refresh, invigorate,  
make me thirst for You alone.

PASSION OF  
CHRIST  
STRENGTHEN ME

where Your love is high lighted,  
where Your strength comes through.  
You are no weakling, Lord!

GOOD JESUS

God, Jesus,  
how ready You are to pay the price  
how patient, how unconditional is  
Your love

HEAR AND  
ANSWER ME

argue, rebuke, convince,  
dialogue me up and down,  
till you over come my resistance



|                                        |                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DEEP IN YOUR<br>WOUNDS                 | how shallow I am.                                                                           |
| HIDE AND<br>SHELTER ME                 | I humbly admit I need shelter from<br>dangers                                               |
| NEVER PART<br>FROM YOU                 | be the choice of my wayward life.<br>be my life companion.                                  |
| GUARD AND<br>DEFEND ME<br>from the foe | The world, the flesh, my pride.<br>Let me see them as foes<br>in spite of their attraction. |
| IN DEATH'S<br>DREAR MOMENTS            | fear of the unknown,<br>sense of my unworthiness,<br>knowledge of my sinfulness             |
| CALL ME,<br>BID ME COME                | Command, I will obey<br>Command me to leave<br>Command me to glory!                         |
| PRAISE YOU WITH<br>YOUR SAINTS         | glorify Your mercies,<br>humbly, gratefully, for ever.                                      |

SOUL OF MY SAVIOUR SANCTIFY ME!



## 24

### WITH MARY ON CALVARY

AT THE CROSS STOOD HIS MOTHER Jn 19,25  
Stood in witness, stood in suffering,  
Stood in oneness with her SON!  
Stood offering Him to the Father.

#### INVITATION

From that vantage point she invites me:  
Come, come close.

There are three distinct groups on this hill:

1. The People stand watching,  
paralysed by human respect, with fear,  
led all the time (spineless majority)  
manipulated, though they had heard Him,  
were cured by Him, and fed.



2. The noisy, vociferous minority,  
     enemies in triumph, mocking, taunting;  
     soldiers mimicking their leaders.

3. Near the Cross, sharing the mystery

### THE MAGIC CIRCLE

here is reality, here is mystery,  
 here is communing, here understanding,  
 here is wisdom, strength, LOVE  
 COME, COME CLOSE.

### LOOK

at the generosity of His Sacrifice!  
 Nothing is held back:  
 Head, face mouth, hands, feet, back, heart  
 all have their own torture, all contribute to  
 the grand redeeming sacrifice!

His blood is shed quite wastefully  
 over the olive roots of Gethsemani,  
 at the praetorium in the scourging,  
 all along the way up to Calvary,  
 and from His opened heart - not another drop to give!

Upon a cross in agony  
 In anguish and in utter infamy,  
 I gave my life, my blood, my majesty  
 To prove my love to men.

(L. Leguen s.j.)

### THINK

1. The Cross shows how far God's love is ready to  
 go to redeem man. He gives his only begotten Son!
2. The Cross shows "of what great weight is sin"  
 (Anselm)

Sin is in action here



in all its brutality,  
in all its ugly scheming,  
in all its heartless hatred,  
in all its spineless cowardice!

3. The Cross shows what man is meant to be like:  
Obedient Son of the Father  
in victory over the world, the flesh, pride.  
Loyal - at a great price!

(Rom 5,19)

**LISTEN** - He speaks seven words from that Cross:

1. "Father, forgive them" Lk 23,34  
The one word of divinity on this hill of hate!  
The Redeemer's cry to the Father,  
The Lover of men making impossible excuses  
for them,  
teaching us the essential Christian virtue -  
forgiveness.
2. "Today you will be with me in paradise" Lk 23,43  
This is His triumph on the Cross!  
He had said: "When I shall be lifted up, I shall  
draw all men to myself" Jn 12,32.  
At what a price, with what infinite love He draws.  
And when the cry comes: "Jesus, remember me".  
there is His royal assurance: hear that tone of voice:  
"Today" - immediate  
"You will be with me, in Paradise".  
The looks exchanged, the tone of triumph!
3. "Woman, behold your son". Jn 19,26  
He turns to me,  
He cleaves my heart, as Faber sings:  
Mother of God he broke thy heart



That it might wider be,  
That in the vastness of its love  
There might be room for me.

I look at him, I look at John, I look at you.

"John took her unto his own" in a new intimacy!

4. "My God, my God, why has Thou forsaken me"  
Mt 27,46

He is wrapt in divinity, with His Father.

This is the Messianic psalm being here fulfilled,  
a reminder to all who will listen.

And yet, it is His desolation, His being cut off  
in sin,

as Paul dares to say: "He who was without sin,  
God made sin for us". 2 Cor 5,21.

Can we ever understand the mystery of divinity  
the abyss of sin?

5. "I thirst" Jn 19,29

To fulfil the Scriptures, says St. John.

That was his exact obedience to all that was written  
a loyal obedience to the Father.

And a thirst for sinners!

6. "It is consummated" Jn 19,30

Not: it is finished. That was the false triumph  
of enemies.

IT IS ACCOMPLISHED. It is achieved. IT IS  
BROUGHT TO ITS FULL SUM!

Cry of triumph.

So it was revealed at Tabor: The death He was  
to achieve at Jerusalem.

You do not achieve a collapse!



7. "Into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit"  
Lk 23,46

When all is accomplished,  
He lifts Himself to full stature,  
He gifts Himself to the Father:  
Supreme way to die!

\* \* \* \*

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?  
HAVE YOU CAUGHT THE WISDOM, FELT THE  
STRENGTH, SHARED THE LOVE?

ARE YOU READY TO WALK HIS ROAD?  
ARE YOU READY TO BE 'ODD' WITH GOD?

A man with a sandwich board on his shoulders was seen walking down the city street. Everybody smiled at what was written on the front board: A FOOL FOR CHRIST!

But when he passed them, and they saw what was written on the board at his back, their smiles froze! On the back was written: WHOSE FOOL ARE YOU?

This is a parable for our day and age, when few think for themselves, few take a stand on their own; when all follow the current fashion, not only in clothes, but in social life, in religious thinking and practice: follow the majority down the broad road, afraid to be laughed at, afraid to stand out, afraid to BE ODD WITH GOD! Says the tempter, according to C.S. Lewis: we have achieved a race of mediocrities!

But ONE does stand out



## TALL ON THE CROSS

STRONG. He was so strong!  
The Man from Galilee,  
It was not safe for Him to be  
when weak men are a majority.

TALL. He was so tall!  
The Man from Galilee,  
It was not safe for Him to be  
Taller than priest or pharisee.

They bound Him with funeral bands.  
He broke them with His nail-pierced hands.  
Upon His corpse they laid a stone.  
He moved it with His breath alone.

Rose and stretched to heaven's light.  
So Strong he was...Such was His height!

(Louise Juarez)

## ARE YOU READY TO STAND OUT IN STRENGTH, WITH HIM?

### A lesson from the Cross

Love without suffering is deceitful  
Suffering without love is torture  
Suffering in love is redemption!

"When pain is to be borne  
A little courage helps more than much knowledge;  
A little human sympathy more than much courage;  
And the least tincture of the love of God more than all".

C.S. Lewis.

\* \* \* \*



BEHOLD I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK.

Apoc 3,20

If Love should count you worthy, and should deign  
One day to seek your door and be your Guest,  
PAUSE! ere you draw the bolt and bid Him rest,  
If in your old content you would remain;

For not alone He enters; in his train  
Are angels of the mist, the lonely guest,  
Dreams of the unfulfilled and unpossessed,  
And sorrow, and life's immemorial pain!

He wakes desires you never may forget,  
He shows you stars you never saw before;  
He makes you share with him for evermore  
The burden of the world's divine regret.

How wise you were to open not; And yet  
How poor if you should turn Him from the door!

Sydney Boyse Lysaght

\* \* \* \*

STABAT MATER

At the Cross, her station keeping  
Stood the mournful Mother weeping  
Close to Jesus to the last.

Through her heart, His sorrow sharing  
All his bitter anguish bearing  
Now at length the sword has passed.

For the sins of his own nation  
Saw Him hang in desolation  
Till his spirit forth He sent.



Holy Mother pierce me through  
In my heart each wound renew  
Of my Saviour crucified.

Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence  
Be thy Mother my defence  
Be thy cross my victory!

**AT THE CROSS STOOD HIS MOTHER!**

Stood in witness, stood in suffering,  
Stood in oneness with Her Son,  
Stood offering Him to the Father

**COME STAND WITH HER  
COME STAND IN STRENGTH  
COME STAND IN LOVE.**



## 25

# LIVING WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

The Risen Christ is the Christ of today.

Yes, he was born for us a child in Bethlehem, lived in Nazareth, mounted his cross to redeem us; rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father. Mk 14,62; Hebr 8,1.

### THE RISEN CHRIST

- triumph of the whole person, body and soul
- triumph of humanity placed at the right hand of the Father
- apotheosis of the Son of God made man
- with full mastery over the world
- judge of the living and the dead. Ps 110,1
- victor over sin and death

### THE ESKHATON IS HERE!

CC-O. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation



## THE RESURRECTION - central theme of our faith

- physical miracle
  - certified dead by the Roman authorities
  - three days in the tomb
  - rose again.
- prophecy miracle: prophesied every time he announced his passion: "the third day he will rise" given as proof of his authority: "Destroy this temple (his body) and in three days I will raise it up again".  
Jn. 2,19
- theological miracle: "If christ has not been raised then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain... you are still in your sins"  
1 Cor 15,14 sqq  
Sin is the reality, death is the sign of sin. Resurrection is the sign that sin is overcome Rom 5,14 sqq

\* \* \* \*

In our meditations with the Risen Christ, St. Ignatius wants us to be "intensely glad and to rejoice in such great glory and joy of Christ our Lord". When we have come right out of ourselves to rejoice with him, for his sake alone, we shall also be ready to follow his way. (Weeping with the crucified, if we are not careful, could be an occasion to mix-in a few tears for ourselves?)

St. Ignatius asks us to pay attention to the "Office of Consoler" that the Risen Christ exercises. Unfortunate English word 'consoler'. How hard is the unction of christ. No unctiousness; He cleaves their hearts like a diamond!



Yes, he is anxious to build them up from their depths of despair; yes, he is willing to teach them all over again; yes he will come to each in turn to build each up; yes, he will warm their hearts, - BUT THEY MUST COME HIS WAY. THE ONE AND ONLY WAY! - Through the cross to resurrection!

**"IT WAS NECESSARY THAT THE CHRIST SHOULD SUFFER" Lk 24,26**

It is necessary that we should die, die to sin, to pride, to self, to the world. There is no other way.

**IT IS NOT EASY TO LIVE WITH THE RISEN CHRIST !!!**

His way was carefully and wisely planned,

His way is strength,

His way is the loyal way of Love.

**WE MUST WALK HIS WAY.**

## **APPARITIONS OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR**

### **1. HE APPEARED TO THE VIRGIN MARY**

St. Ignatius calls this his first apparition, because the scripture supposes us to have understanding!

Is this just filial piety?

Is this 16th century romanticism?

**NO, THIS IS SALVATION HISTORY!**

Mary's role in salvation history is with her Son. She was his closest cooperator. So the II Vatican Council spells it out: "Rightly the holy Fathers see her as used by God not merely in a passive way, but as cooperating in the work of human salvation through free faith and obedience. For as St. Irenaeus



says, she "being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race". LG 56

Her risen Son was not just rewarding her for her suffering, but sharing with her the completion of his redemptive act, sharing with her as eminent member of the Church.

Imagination can play a part in picturing this meeting of the risen Lord with his blessed mother. But the depth of sharing is really too deep for words. There was nothing said, only with their eyes: understanding, rapture and overwhelming love!

Like a mother meeting her newly ordained son in silent rapture, arms outstretched, heart filled with the overwhelming goodness of God.

"She had heard the word of God and kept it" Lk 11,27 she will continue her role by his side: Mother of the Church.

## 2. **MARY MAGDALENE** Jn 20,11-18

Here is genuine love, but not attentive enough to his word. She loves him in her way, not his! Spices to embalm him more carefully than was possible on Good Friday, HER HORIZONTAL JESUS!

"Why seek the living among the dead" Lk 24,5  
Her Jesus could not be standing upright, surely?  
So even when he speaks to her she does not recognise him.

"AND HE SAID TO HER: MARY!"

- called her by name (Hebrew significance, where name is direct penetration to person)
- got her on the live communication link.
- and the whole of her awakened to him:



**PRECIOUS LIFE LINE - CALLED BY NAME!**

- "MARY" - "RABBUNI"
- and she is his first apostle, to the apostles!

**3. ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS** Lk 24,13-35

He cared enough to walk with them.

They did not recognise him.

Again they had paid no attention to his teaching:

"the third day he will rise again".

He cared enough to teach them again:

**COUNSELLOR PAR EXCELLENCE!**

First he let them pour out their doubt, dismay, despair.

Then he took the trouble to teach all over again,

"beginning from Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the Scriptures, all the things concerning himself.

He warmed their hearts.

**"O FOOLISH MEN, SLOW OF HEART TO BELIEVE ALL THAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN. WAS IT NOT NECESSARY THAT THE CHRIST SHOULD SUFFER THESE THINGS AND SO ENTER INTO HIS GLORY"?**

He Brought Them To The One And Only Way.

Would they learn? **WILL WE LEARN?**

How hard is the unction of Christ. He cleaves their hearts like a diamond!

**4. HE APPEARS TO THE APOSTLES** Jn 20,19-23

It is Easter Sunday evening.

The Redeemer, in the first flush of his victory over sin and death! What else could be his gift to them and to Church through them!

**"RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT  
WHOSE SINS YOU SHALL FORGIVE  
THEY ARE FORGIVEN"**



Sacrament of Reconciliation - Easter gift of the Redeemer  
- to give his sinful Apostles the power to forgive sinners!

Sense of humour?

Sense of humanity!

Depth understanding for the ministers of forgiveness!

5. **THOMAS** Jn 20,24-39

He kept Thomas stewing in his unbelief for eight days!

Then he cares enough to come - after all it is one of  
"those thou hast given me".

"Come put your finger...put your hand..."

Nowhere is it said that Thomas put his finger or hand...

"My Lord and my God", says Thomas.

Others have said that the unbelief of Thomas confirms our belief. But Jesus has a special lesson for Thomas "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe". Believe whom? The college of Apostles, the Church! Faith is a special approach to God through the authority of those appointed to teach. No claim to a special vision!

6. **BY THE SEA OF TIBERIAS** Jn 21

Beautiful chapter, full intimate touches, human and divine.

The Apostles, at a loose end, are on a fishing trip! And the Risen Jesus fully human and divine, joins in.

"My little ones (dear ones) have you caught anything?"

He knew, but he wants their confession: NADA (absolutely nothing)



“Cast the net and find! Find 153 BIG FISH!”

“It is the Lord”, intuition of John.

Dash of Peter, always impetuous? always full of heart!

On the shore: “A charcoal fire, with fish broiling on it & bread” prepared by the Risen Lord? for his absolutely famished apostles, doubly empty for having caught nothing! His human touch.

“Come and have breakfast”. No one moves.

He serves them himself. They eat in silence, knowing well...

“When breakfast was over, he said to Simon Peter”

He would not take Peter on an empty stomach! “Simon, son of John” - why has he reverted to the old name, the purely human origin? To build him again as ROCK?

Again, “Simon, son of John...

And again...

Peter was grieved that he said to him the third time...

“Lord”, he said, “you know all things, **you know that I love you**”

HE DARED, The three times sinner dared to challenge the all knowing redeemer. Challenge him on his sincere repentance!

AND THE REDEEMER DID NOT DENY IT.



“Feed my sheep”. You are the Rock again,  
repentant sinner,  
on my love, given and accepted.  
Is this the qualification for being  
HEAD OF THE CHURCH?

**The new intimacy** between the Redeemer and his vicar on earth.  
His best gift: **YOU WILL BE CRUCIFIED LIKE ME!**

He knows no better way, no wiser way,  
no more loving way!

He shares this with all his closest friends, with Martha, with  
his Mother, with Peter. **THE WAY OF THE RISEN CHRIST.**



## 26

### THE PILGRIM CHURCH

The Second Vatican Council speaks of the Church as **PILGRIM**

1. On the way, not yet at the goal.
2. With clear vision.
3. Sinful but rising!

The theological word for that is **ESCHATOLOGICAL**  
of the end-time, the 'already' & the 'not yet'.

- lighted by the vision of Faith
- sustained by firm Hope
- fired with Love

Poetry in the Office of the Dedication of Church pictures this complex reality in two stanzas:



1. Heavenly City Jerusalem,  
Blessed vision of Peace,  
Built up of living stones,  
Raised up to the heights.

Happy Bride,  
Dowered by the Father with glory,  
Graced by the Spouse,  
Queen most beautiful!  
Wedded to Christ the King  
Heaven's bright City!

2. I hear the sound of hammer and chisel;  
Stones hewn and polished,  
Set in ordered rows  
Locked in with Christ the Keystone.

The heavenly choir singing praises...  
The voices on earth, catching the strains  
Till one mighty harmony goes forth!

\* \* \* \*

We have three points in this meditation:

1. The Celestial Vision
2. The Earthly scene
3. Head in the clouds, feet firmly planted on earth.

### 1. CELESTIAL VISION

"I saw the heavenly City Jerusalem  
coming out of heaven from God,  
prepared as a bride for her husband...  
A voice called from the throne:  
Look, here God lives with men"

Apocalypse 21,1-3



“Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her  
that He might sanctify her,  
cleansing her by the washing of water with the word;  
that He might present the Church to Himself in splendour,  
without spot or wrinkle or any such thing;  
that she might be holy and without blemish”

Ephesians V 25

There stood the Bride of Christ,  
with a look in her eye and a smile on her lips,  
claiming me,  
solely because I was a child of God;  
and because to her He had said:  
Take this child and nurse it for me,  
and I will give thee thy wages.  
BECAUSE FIRST AND LAST, SHE WAS HIS BRIDE  
AND I WAS HIS SON.

Hugh Benson

CITY OF GOD  
COMMUNITY OF HEAVEN  
THE HOLY TRINITY  
OUR LADY AT THE SIDE OF HER SON  
And therefore “with angels and archangels....  
we sing to Thy glory: HOLY, HOLY, HOLY GOD.

## 2. THE EARTHLY SCENE

There are as many defects awaiting our discovery as reside  
in human nature. The number of disappointments will vary  
according to the number of our expectations.

“One is constantly meeting travellers who are puzzled  
that Italians gossip in their churches, kiss behind a pillar, spit  
in the aisles, wheel a bicycle in one door and out another.



These observers are equally shocked by the sight of unshaven friars with faces like pirates, begging nuns in the capital of Christendom, gaudy and grubby dolls, tinsel bambinos, baby virgins and the like, in lovely quattrocento churches, cheek-by-jowl with exquisite sculpture; and when I say that I found these bambinos both horrible and funny, even this will probably shock; as if religion were not sometimes so funny that we must laugh at it with God". Sean O'Faolain.

\* \* \* \*

"There is a city, full, as are all cities, of halt and maimed and blind and evil and the rest; but it is the city of God. There are not two such cities on earth. There is ONE. One thing in this world is different from all others. It has personality and a force. It is recognised, and when recognised most violently loved or hated. IT IS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH!

Within that household the human spirit has roof and hearth,  
Outside it is the Night.

*In hac urbe lux sollennis  
Ver aeternum, pax perennis  
Et aeterna gaudia*

*In this city is light so solemn,  
Spring eternal, peace unfading  
And eternal joy"*

*Hilaire Belloc*

THE CHURCH IS NOT A CLUB OF SAINTS. IT IS THE  
HOME FOR SINNERS!

\* \* \* \*

"There are politics inside the Church as well as out of it. There are questing minds and reluctant ones. There are blind



traditionalists and too eager innovators. There are men who sacrifice order to growth, and others who reach so boldly for change that they hold it back for centuries.

There are rank pietists and fierce ascetics. There are administrators and apostles. AND GOD HELP ANY LUCK-LESS FELLOW WHO IS CAUGHT BETWEEN THE MILLSTONES".

Morris West.

\* \* \* \*

AND YET, IT IS THIS HUMAN, FRAIL CHURCH THAT IS THE "SIGN LIFTED UP TO THE NATIONS" - One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic.

- ONE - uniting in faith and worship.  
unique; separating from all that is false  
building all that is good.
- HOLY - in her teaching,  
in her purity ("green in celibacy" Gandhi)  
in her power to sanctify, to lift up to God,  
the grown person's idea of holiness, not  
merely stainless.
- CATHOLIC - World embracing  
The world is hers because the world is  
Christ's  
She speaks the whole truth, not piecemeal
- APOSTOLIC - Founded on the Apostles in unbroken  
succession.  
Labouring in the Apostolic model.  
Giving sweat and blood in the vineyard.



## CHURCH OF OUR CENTURY

The teaching and example of Holy Popes for 100 years.  
Firm doctrine in a crumbling world.

Holding the respect of the nations in social & political fields.

Claiming outstanding Catholic States men and writers.

### 3. HEAD IN THE CLOUDS, FEET FIRMLY PLANTED ON EARTH

I hear the sound of hammer and chisel...

No treatise on architecture is sufficient to put up a building.

It takes hewing and shaping the stone, even if the stone complain!

There are three types of stone required for the building:

1. FOUNDATION: Strong stones that can bear weight, stay hidden and support the whole.
2. THE WALLS: row on row of patterned stone, taking dressing all in the same motive, anonymous in their rows.
3. THE ARCH: finely chiselled, locked-in closely (no cement) and tightly fitting with the keystone (Christ).

WHICH STONE WILL YOU BE?



## OUT OF THE METAPHOR INTO REALITY

"You are a royal race, a kingly people", says St. Peter

1 Pet 2,9

- We must meet the challenge of stable marriage, indissoluble in love.
- The challenge of married purity in a day of crumbling morals.
- The challenge of persevering religious consecration and priestly celibacy, the breath of heaven!
- The challenge of obedience under authority, against the raucous claims of individualism.
- The challenge of the poor against status and greed.
- The challenge of unity in a divided Christianity.

\* \* \* \*

Fr. Karl Rahner spells this Church in an age of challenge:

"She is the Church of Christ, precisely by reason of the fact that God's incarnate, forgiving grace has taken hold of human beings like ourselves, with all our constantly morally threatened burden of existence - and has fashioned them into the Church. Precisely by the fact that

death is accepted in obedience

the light of God is believed in darkness

uncertainty is always entrusted to the Mystery. There comes into existence that community of believers which is and, by grace of God, will always remain the Church".

Investigation V 340

\* \* \* \*

In a day of crisis, not dissimilar to ours, the poet Francis Thompson wrote his poem of hope, LILIUM REGIS where under the metaphor of THE LILY OF THE KING he apostrophizes the Church:



## LILIUM REGIS

O lily of the king! low lies thy silver wing,  
And long has been the hour of thine unqueening;  
And thy scent of Paradise on the night-wind spills its  
sighs,

Nor any take the secrets of its meaning.

O lily of the King! I speak a heavy thing,

O patience, most sorrowful of daughters!

Lo, the hour is at hand for the troubling of the land,  
And red shall be the breaking of the waters.

Sit fast upon thy stalk, when the blast shall with thee talk  
With the mercies of the King for thine awning;  
And the just understand that thine hour is at hand,  
Thine hour at hand with power in the dawning.  
When the nations lie in blood, and their kings a broken  
brood

Look up, O most sorrowful of daughters!

Lift up thy head and hark what sounds are in the dark,  
For His feet are coming to thee on the waters.

O Lily of the King! I shall not see, that sing,

I shall not see the hour of thy queening!

But my Song shall see, and wake like a flower that  
dawn winds shake,

And sigh with joy the odours of its meaning.

O Lily of the King, remember then the thing

That this dead mouth sang; and thy daughters,

As they dance before His way, sing there on the Day  
What I sang when the Night was on the waters!



## 27

### CONTEMPLATION FOR LOVE

This is the crowning contemplation of the Spiritual Exercises. St. Ignatius has been building up to it from the very first.

#### THE DYNAMIC OF THE IGNATIAN RETREAT

##### PRINCIPLE & FOUNDATION:

"GOD OUR LORD" - he has set our sights!

"TANTUM QUANTUM" - creatures are to be used  
only in so far as they help....

active "INDIFFERENCE" - the equipoise

"CHOOSING WHAT MORE LEADS" -  
directive to love.



### SIN MEDITATIONS:

Colloquies are directed to the love of the Crucified.  
with the triple question: What have I done for Christ?  
What am I doing for Christ?  
What I ought to do for Christ!

Even in the 'hell' meditation Crucified Love draws me.

### THE KINGDOM:

The call to intimate personal partnership "WITH ME"  
"Those who wish to show greater AFFECTION...  
the prayer for an INTERIOR KNOWLEDGE OF OUR  
LORD THAT I MAY THE MORE LOVE AND  
FOLLOW HIM

### THE TWO STANDARDS:

He presents the attractive personality of Christ,  
so that the difficult programme becomes possible

### THE THREE CLASSES OF MEN:

To remove the 'affection' for created things that is  
a hindrance.

### THE THIRD DEGREE OF HUMILITY = THE GREAT LEAP OF LOVE!

to actually become more like Him.

### THE PASSION MEDITATIONS:

"all this for me"!

### THE RISEN CHRIST:

"be intensely glad and rejoice in such great glory  
and joy of Christ our Lord"!

### CONTEMPLATION FOR LOVE

- the crowning relationship.



## GOD'S LOVE & THE HUMAN RESPONSE

Love is a gift, love is spark, love is of God.

Love is poured out into our hearts Rom 5.5. - infused virtue

Love's direct object is God himself - a theological virtue.

AND THE HUMAN HEART HAS BEEN PREPARED TO  
RECEIVE THIS GIFT.

1. "A loving nature as it comes from the hand of God:  
is easily led to think little of itself,  
is distracted from itself by appreciation & admiration  
of that which it finds around it and in others,  
seeks not its own, no self-gratification, no looking  
for self- reward.

2. Love stirs by its joys and sorrows,  
is not led by mere argument, dead and fallacious  
reasoning, or blinking vision.

Love will overleap itself -  
is not stopped by a false 'prudence'

3. Love acts with courage, a certain daring:  
"give and does not count the cost,  
fights and does not heed the wounds,  
toils and does not seek for rest,  
labours and looks for no reward".

Goes to the battlefield and gives life,  
goes upon the mission field, tends the diseased,  
"Greater love than this no man has....

When the spirit is moved to act, to give itself for that  
which is noble, to follow the light, then let it go. Do not  
hesitate; do not keep it in fetters; do not too much count the  
cost; do not tremble at the danger, or if you do, for you cannot



always help it, set your teeth and step forward. "He that puts his hand to the plough and looks back is not worthy of me"

Lk 9,62

Alban Goodier s.j.: Essay on Love

Says Augustine: "Amor meus, pondus meum"- love is my precious burden!

LOVE IS A DECISION,

not a feeling, or if you follow Walter Trobisch:

Love is a feeling to be learned.

It is tension and fulfilment.

It is deep longing and hostility.

It is gladness and it is pain.

There is not one without the other.

Happiness is only a part of love - this is what has to be learned. Suffering belongs to love also. This is the mystery of love, its beauty and its burden

LOVE IS A FEELING TO BE LEARNED.

### THE CONTEMPLATION

Two practical notes from St. Ignatius:

1. Love ought to be found in deeds, rather than words.

James 1,22.

2. Love consists in mutual exchange between the lovers.

**1st prelude:** The whole heavenly court:  
God our Lord, his angels and saints

**2nd Prelude:** Ask for an interior knowledge  
of the depth of his love, so that in  
gratitude I may  
love and serve his Divine Majesty.



THERE ARE FOUR POINTS, EACH TAKING US DEEPER INTO GOD'S LOVE:

1. **GOD GIVES**

Dwell with deep affection on how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much He has given me:

of that which he has

that which he is - his best gifts are himself! Actually He is always present in his gifts:

examples; creation, redemption, sacraments, vocation.

I GIFT IN RETURN, WITH GREAT AFFECTION, myself the heart of all I give.

"Take, O lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will, whatsoever I have and possess. Thou hast given all these things to me; to Thee, O Lord, I restore them; all are Thine, dispose of them all according to Thy will. Give me thy love and Thy grace, for this is enough for me".

**Liberty:**

Prime gift of love, wherein I share his self-determining

**Memory:**

treasure house now of His loving giving.

**Understanding:**

to Probe the Depths of God Himself.

**ALL my WILL:**

Total gift.

We are enriched by his giving,

We are doubly enriched by his return Grace and Love.



## LAVISHNESS

Why have you made the great stars race  
And whirl in dreadful vacancy,  
And thunder through the depthless space,  
So far removed from earth and me  
That I forget to think of them  
The pride of heaven's diadem?

Why have you made the violet grow  
In lonely valleys, hid in gloom;  
Why have you made the lily blow  
By crags, in unobserved bloom;  
So that unseen by any eye,  
They smile unnoticed, fade and die?

Why have you made night's fire-brand  
Peep into groves and forests deep?  
Why have you made a fairy land  
When all the tired world's asleep?  
Why let the moon beams slip away  
When none have seen their silver play?

Why have you made our welcome light  
A rainbow woof of many rays -  
Then let it shine a beam just white?  
Unfathomable are your ways!  
In all your gifts I feel I see  
A loving prodigality.

You made the world, and no one knew;  
You blessed, with but a sad return;  
You gave and then escaped from view -  
Ah, here's a lovely thing to learn:  
Would I like you, could give and bless  
With this sweet, selfless lavishness"

Frank West s.j.



## 2. GOD IS PRESENT IN HIS GIFTS

dwelling in his creatures:  
in the elements, giving them being,  
in the plants, giving them growth,  
in the animals, giving them feeling,  
in man, giving being, growth, feeling,  
understanding!

“as in a temple” - not a material temple, but in a living reflection of God’s being, feeling, understanding love.

## THE PRESENCE OF GOD

I see his blood upon the rose,  
And in the stars the glory of his eyes.  
His body gleams amid the eternal snows,  
His tears fall from the skies.

I see his face in every flower.  
The thunder and the singing of the birds  
Are but his voice; and carven by his power  
Rocks are his written word.

All pathways by his feet are worn  
His strong heart stirs the ever beating sea  
His crown of thorns is twined in every thorn  
His Cross is every tree.

Alfred Noyes

## 3. GOD IS PRESENT AS ONE WHO LABOURS

bringing to fulness, delighting in the growth he gives.  
directing the powerful universe in its unfolding,  
from pretty flower to thundering cloud burst!  
from humble soil formation to hard diamond!  
Most of all in the unfolding of man in His image and likeness:  
from helpless child, growing limbs, searching  
intelligence, to full blown partner of divinity!



#### 4. **ALL CREATION PARTICIPATES IN HIS DIVINE BEING**

as rays from the sun, waters from the spring  
all **RADIATING DIVINITY!**

A thin line separates Christian Mysticism from  
material emanentism.

At each point "Take and Receive" is a deeper return:

1. My gift, my self in my gifts.
2. My presence reflecting God's presence communing.
3. My active, hard work in self growth, and growth of others.
4. Pure radiance of his love and glory.

**SO LOVE COMES INTO ITS OWN, OUT OF HEAVEN  
INTO MY BEING AND THROUGH ME INTO THIS  
WORLD OF HIS, THE GREATEST OF HIS GIFTS.**

"If I speak with the eloquence of men and of angels, but have no love, I become no more than blaring brass or crashing cymbal. If I have the gift of foretelling the future and hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but the very secrets of God, and if I also have that absolute faith which can move mountains, but have no love, I amount to nothing at all. If I dispose of all that I possess, yes, even if I give my own body to be burned, but have no love, I achieve precisely nothing.

This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive; it is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.

Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy. It does not keep account of



evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it is glad with all good men when truth prevails.

Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen.

When I was a little child I talked and felt and thought like a little child. Now that I am a man my childish speech and feeling and thought have no further significance for me.

At present we are men looking at puzzling reflections in a mirror. The time will come when we shall see reality whole and face to face! At present, all I know is a little fraction of the truth, but the time will come when I shall know it as fully as God now knows me! In this life, we have three great lasting virtues: faith, hope, love. But the greatest of them is love

I Cor 13.

J.M. College of Education  
Raipur, Bantala  
Jammu

Acc. No. 2183 (D)  
Dated 4-11-2015



## HAVE YOU MET JESUS CHRIST?

“Full of thought provoking insights  
that should lead to a complete  
surrender of oneself in love to Jesus”

† Valerian, Bishop of Pune.

“Inspiring, thought provoking, awakening the heart  
in a pithy style,  
a living communication”.

Fr. Philip Terrasa s.j.  
Sp. guide & retreat master.

“Many insights in the interpretation of the  
Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, and the  
texts of Scripture so abundantly used.  
Valid and relevant thoughts on community  
building, faith and obedience; psychological  
insights for growth in love and relationships.”

Fr. Tony da Silva s.j.  
Dr. and Professor of Psychology.

“Top notch! especially for sisters who have taken  
vows. You have condensed the essentials very ably.  
We need the detailed instructions on the vows  
and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.”

Sr. Ann Clement FC  
former provincial and formator  
Daughters of the Cross, Bandra.

“The prayers, at the end of the talks  
lead to the Person of Jesus Christ.”

Fr. Vincent Gnarakatt SSP

St. Paul's Fathers, Pune



# LATE HAVE I LOVED YOU

Late have I loved You  
O Beauty so ancient and so new  
Late have I loved You!

You called and cried to me  
To break open my deafness  
You sent forth your beams  
To chase away my blindness

You breathed fragrance on me  
As I drew in my breath  
And now I pant for you

I tasted you  
And now hunger and thirst for you  
You touched me  
And I have longed for your peace

It is with no doubtful knowledge  
But with utter certainty  
that I love You

You have stricken my heart  
with your word  
And I have loved you.

St. Augustine  
Confessions 10.27 10.6

